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Design

269 May 1971

Local government

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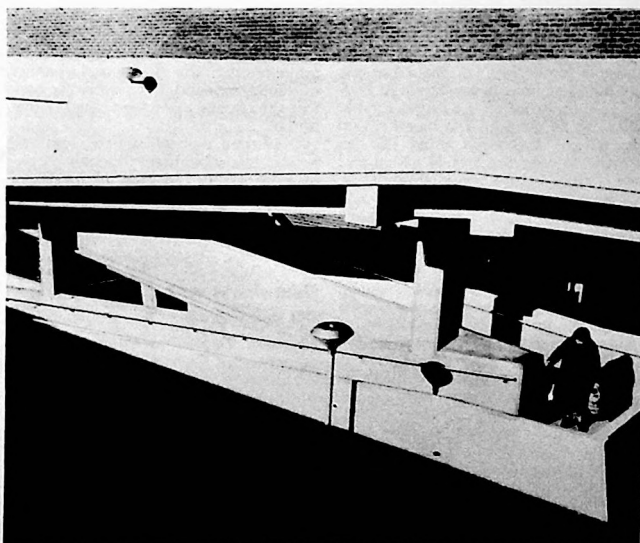
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In this issue

Local government design Most of this issue is devoted to studies of local authorities in action (or inaction). Rather than try to encompass the whole vast range of activity, we have concentrated on specific projects or places – a new town hall, three approaches to play space, two town centres (one exuberant, one in danger of dying). John Ardill, regional affairs correspondent of the *Guardian* discusses the key role of the buyer, who can influence so many design decisions, and Russell Miller finds out how our places are doing with

finds that most councils lack commonsense over graphics, let alone designers. Throughout, we try to define the place of humans in local government thinking, and hope that they do not all feel as bewildered as the old lady, above, at Aylesbury.

John Perkins, a 25 year old freelance photographer, took all pictures for the local government feature (except where credited otherwise). Perkins, who contributes regularly to the *Daily Telegraph Magazine* and *Car*, completed the assignment in about a week, travelling overnight between locations.

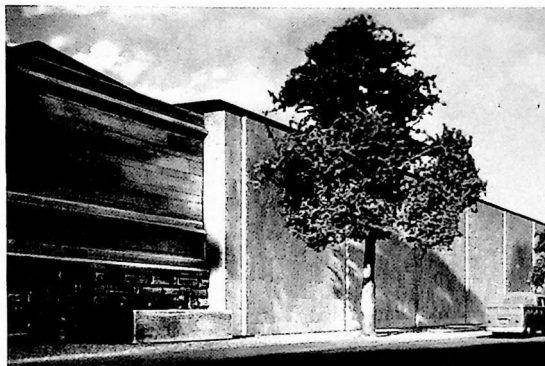
This month a large number of the population of Great Britain go to the Polls to elect their representatives for parish, rural, urban and borough councils. The influence of local government, directly and indirectly, on our environment is enormous; local authorities spend millions on everything from lavatory paper and canteen knives and forks to door knobs, housing schemes, complex service plants and new motorways. There is no area of manufacture or building in which they are not concerned. In amenity and visual terms local government, on a collective basis, can make or break the quality of Britain.

There are still councils at which party whips are put on for even such matters as the design of a public lavatory or the arrangement of evergreen bushes to hide it. Fortunately there are rather fewer of these councils than there used to be. Good design is not a political matter, although there are places where the situation is so bad that it deserves to be made one. A number of councils almost invite candidates to stand on an amenity design ticket and sweep the board.

But the political parties can all point to those councils which they control whose design policy is disgraceful and to those which are trying to do good. The aim of a sensible design policy should be for design as an integral part of every project with which local authorities are involved.

Except for articles on two of the Cold capital goods awards (two more will be shown in June) this entire issue is devoted to local government design. We do not attempt to cover some large and important areas of design. The subject is far too wide, and it is not one which we would like to deal with on a once and for all basis. We do not, for instance, include anything on housing, transport, education and public libraries, since it was felt that these could not be treated in a global generalised way. There is also the complex subject of the relationship of local authorities to individuals which again this issue is only able to look at from a limited standpoint.

It is not intended that projects and products shown in this issue should be thought of as models of their kind, necessarily to be followed in every instance. They are viewed on their own individual merits and in their formal context. But they are treated



An extension for the Tate

It seems as if, at very long last, the Tate Gallery is going to get an extension, designed by Llewelyn Davies Weeks Forester-Walker & Bor, on the empty corner at the rear of the present building. Visually it is a simple scheme, not the kind of project to stir up the kind of debate that was triggered off by the proposal to encase the river front of the gallery. Yet in terms of museum design the extension raises some important issues.

Internally the main gallery, 18,000 sq ft, leaves several pertinent questions open. Technically, the 21 light and air-conditioning control hoods, each 29ft square, should undoubtedly work successfully. But they are likely to give exhibition designers relatively little flexibility. Only 16ft above the floor, their effect on the appearance and atmosphere of the gallery can only be judged when more detailed drawings are published. They could work; equally they could be disastrous. Despite a very sophisticated presentation, it is impossible for anybody to make a real judgement yet.

Externally, the extension is acceptable, although the joining of the old and new walling is unhappy, and the tower at the back of the building, containing conservation studios and workshops, is not very satisfactory. The main part of the extension will be faced with Roachbed Portland stone, which is splendid indeed. But it is a pity that the architects did not propose a scheme using another material, say brick. Since this is a modern extension, the case for not disguising the fact is a strong one. Obviously to have tried to have produced a continuation of the existing exterior — rustication, temples and all — would have been impossible. Therefore, in itself, the Portland stone is not a fair compromise, particularly at a cost which, at a guess, must be around £200,000.

There is an additional problem. The main extension to the Tate Gallery will be on the site of the Queen Alexandra Military Hospital, just across Bulinga Road, when it is removed in about 1975. There is therefore a case for closing Bulinga Road and erecting the new building as a linked extension to the Tate. If the present proposal goes ahead then either the Portland stone work will reduce the options of the Ministry of Environment and the Trustees of the Tate and stop such a scheme from being considered, or within less than five years it could certainly become the most expensive internal wall in the country.

On the other hand, a brick wall would not only make a splendid contemporary addition to the Tate, but would also

work satisfactorily which ever way the hospital site decision finally goes. To hold up the extension would be tragic, but if the Portland stone could be replaced without any further delay the decision to build in brick would be justified. Such a scheme would surely win the praise of the Fine Art Commission, the encouragement and support of the Minister, and vindicate all the work which Lady Dartmouth and the GLC historic buildings board have done on behalf of the Tate.

Fresh minds at the GLDP inquiry

Town planning in Britain will never be quite the same again after the inquiry into the Greater London Development Plan is over. On the one hand a cloud has been cast over the transportation planning techniques used in traffic demand forecasting. On the other life and land use have been shown to flow on as inexorably as a river in a great city such as London. The moral is that the tail of technique must not be allowed to wag the dog of policy and that change is continuous and normal. Planners, like property developers and shop-keepers must therefore always be taking a fresh look at what is going on. Policy must be regularly revised to take account of changing conditions even if there are no political changes. A 30 year highway building programme is accordingly ridiculous. All sorts of adjustments to living and transport can be expected over such a period that will render the later phases of the plan obsolete long before they can be executed.

This description of change and uncertainty is not a surreptitious way of advocating trend planning. It is an attempt to depict the kind of urban flux made vividly apparent by the London inquiry and in which trend and interventionist planners alike have to operate.

It is impossible to tell at this stage if any of this has dawned on the GLC or on Frank Layfield, chairman of the inquiry. Mr Layfield is as benign as he is inscrutable. Nevertheless the unfolding panorama of new information and fresh insights that have flowed from the objectors to the plan, and from the GLC itself, probably has no equal in the history of London.

Among highlights of the transport discussions has been the GLC's own evidence. As expected it is more explicit than ever before in deploying the case for highway building and it also, for the first time, gives investment figures for buses, tubes and suburban railways. But notable for its absence is any discussion of the effect on bus and tube fares, and therefore on the

mobility of those without cars, of the proposed highway network. Students of the inquiry have also noted that Peter Scott, joint director of planning and transportation, and a key policy maker, was kept as much as possible out of the witness box. Instead the battling has been done by Brian Martin and David Bayliss, which means that it has centred on techniques such as transport modelling rather than on policy. This tendency was assisted by the excellent brief put in by Camden which concentrated on a meticulous destruction of the GLC's transport planning in order to show that there was no justification for the northern side of the inner motorway box, but advanced no alternative policies.

The same could not be said of Croydon and Greenwich. Both boroughs advocated road pricing as a way of eliminating the need for motorways and thus pushed this tantalising economic mechanism through the political sound barrier. At about the same time the Department of the Environment announced that the hardware for automatic road toll collection is to be tried out by the Road Research Laboratory in the Mersey Tunnel.

It was left to Michael Thomson, a transport research fellow at London School of Economics, to show that an alternative and comprehensive package of transport policies for London could be designed. He deployed these in a 300 page statement submitted jointly by the London Motorway Action Group and the London Amenity and Transport Association. The package included a holding back on motorway building in inner London and the building of new roads around shopping centres instead, thus improving conditions for the people working and shopping in them. Companion measures would be improvements to the quality and quantity of public transport, fares subsidies and, for the buses, priorities over other traffic.

Only time will tell which view will prevail but with the Whitehall grapevine forecasting big cuts in funds for expensive urban motorways the omens look favourable for those who seek to modify London's transport plans.

Russians put pressure on SST

M Henri Ziegler, president of Aérospatiale, the French partner in Concorde, made a few headlines recently when he produced a Russian brochure at a press conference which promised that the USSR's supersonic airliner would enter service this year. It suited his purpose at the time, which was to show the doubters that if neither of the Western SSTs are built the Soviets could well sweep the field. In fact there was nothing new about the brochure, which appears to have been lying around in the offices of Aeroflot, the USSR State airline, for a little while beforehand.

More important than M Ziegler's was a statement by a Soviet press attaché in the United States which confirmed that the aircraft, the Tu-144, would enter service between Moscow and Khabarovsk before the end of the year. Western experts remain sceptical, but equally Russian official spokesmen are not noted for being forthcoming, let alone chancing their arms with stories that are not approved at the top. Possibly what Aeroflot has in mind is a period of restricted trial service, perhaps carrying mail only, with passenger certification following at a later date. In this way the airline could claim a "first" and add considerably to

its prestige around the airlines of the world.

The time may be past when Aeroflot cared little for its image in the outside world. As the world's biggest airline (by a long chalk) it is intent on developing its international services. But by all accounts (including those in the Russian press) it is far indeed from being the world's most efficient airline, since it is not subject to the commercial pressures felt in the West.

The Tu-144 may come up to standard for service with Aeroflot long before it would be a practicable proposition for any Western airline to buy (and Pan American executives have already been to Moscow to investigate its potential). This is not to say that safety standards are any lower in Aeroflot than in the West, but simply that economic performance, especially in such basic areas as serviceability, engine overhaul life and even the time it takes to refuel and empty the lavatories between flights are so much more important here. It is not long since a 36-hour turnaround for international flights was normal in Moscow.

As part of her aviation expansion, Russia joined the International Civil Aviation Organisation last autumn, and Aeroflot is expected to join the airlines' association, IATA, before long. What sort of progress is being made on the equipment side we may be able to judge more clearly at the Paris air show at the beginning of June. And if the Tu-144 is indeed nearly ready for service, then we shall surely see it there alongside Concorde.

Is Loughborough a precedent?

Is the so called binary policy — which has firmly kept polytechnics, art colleges and colleges of education from amalgamation with universities since 1965 — now on the point of reversal? The significance of the Loughborough merger scheme, just put forward in a well timed piece of kitemaking, is that a number of other colleges and universities may feel that it gives the green light to merger suggestions all round the country.

At Loughborough there are specially auspicious factors. The technological university, the art and design college, the college of education and the technical college all share the same large campus. Until the fifties they were virtually one unit, the product of the very imaginative founder of Loughborough, Herbert Schofield, who believed in student residence on the campus, technological training in something close to factory conditions, and a broad vision of education; unusually for educators he was also an entrepreneur — and it thanks to him that a smallish Midland town has one of the finest higher education complexes in Britain.

Now a working party, including the Vice-Chancellor, and the principals of the art and education colleges, has proposed to restore Schofield's vision by a complete merger within two years. Only the technical college, providing a local service in Leicestershire, would be kept out of this administrative marriage. Significantly, too, the working party was chaired by Stewart Mason, the retiring education director of Leicestershire who was recently appointed by Mrs Thatcher to be Sir John Summerson's successor on the National Council for Diplomas in Art and Design; he is one of the most prestigious figures in local education and more than once Mrs Thatcher has found it convenient to quote the famous Leicestershire comprehensive

plan as a token of the merits of Tory shires.

It will be hard to say no to the Loughborough plan, for it makes good sense and is the kind of local initiative the present Government appreciates. But to accept it without a more general statement of Government policy on the future of the two sectors in higher education would be a dangerous concession to "ad hocery". As it is the James Inquiry into teacher training is quite likely to obliterate the binary line in the interests of teacher training alone. If Mrs T approves Loughborough, how can she really permit the continued breaking up of the campus shared by Aston and Birmingham Polytechnic, or the administrative divisions in the Manchester precinct, or the chaos which is higher education in London? If Loughborough is taken as a precedent the old Robbins formula of all higher education under one university roof could easily come in a rush.

Sick transit in America

America's passenger train network which makes British Rail Inter-City look like a Utopian dream, is rapidly shrinking at a time when the country's transport needs require the most dramatic expansion of service. And each new programme announced with pride by the Nixon Administration turns out to be a step backward for the cause of rail-based rapid transit.

Late in 1970, the Department of Transportation announced what it called its "basic network" of passenger train routes to be operated by the quasi-governmental corporation (similar to the new Post Office scheme) that has taken over the inter-city system this spring. John A Volpe, the Secretary of Transportation, described the proposed network as a new opportunity for putting stability, profit, and performance into the nation's rail lines.

Actually, the scheme presented by Mr Volpe represents a severe setback for passenger service. It will leave the country with fewer than 150 passenger trains in daily operation, compared to 366 today. As recently as 1969 some 500 inter-city trains were running, and even that is pathetic when compared to the 20 000 that linked the nation in 1928. Yet the Government continually refers to all this as progress.

Railroads in America are losing about \$200 millions a year, and the private lines claim they will need \$36 billions (most of which they hope to extract from the Government in direct subsidies) for new equipment in the next decade. There isn't any way to make a profit on passenger service these days, the railroads claim, since most people prefer to ride the highways for free.

Highway travel, in fact, is anything but free (most Americans spend between \$1000 and \$2000 a year to own and maintain each automobile, to say nothing of highway tolls and taxes), and the highways are rarely more free of traffic congestion than the air is free of deadly pollutants produced by all the cars. Man has never developed a more inefficient method of getting around. Yet the highway lobby (a gigantic pool of political power and revenue representing the auto makers, the oil companies, construction contractors, and even cement producers) has bullied or bribed Congressmen and state legislators into taking its side for years. The Nixon Administration, despite its high-sounding statements in support of rapid transit, still seems to have its heart in the highways. The President recently signed a multi-

million-dollar extension of the Federal highway programme that will permit the architects of this system to run their roads through central cities for the first time.

The city most desperately in need of new transport facilities is undoubtedly Los Angeles, which has been turned into an ecologist's nightmare by its dependence on the automobile. The Department of Transportation claims to be coming to the city's rescue with funding for the design and development of a 150-miles-an-hour air-cushion vehicle that will ride on rails; but its only function will be to get people from the centre of town to the airport a bit quicker — a convenience, certainly, but hardly the most urgent necessity.

A proposition on the ballot in California's most recent election, would have permitted some of the millions collected in gasoline taxes to be used for rapid transit projects and the fight against smog, instead of spending all of it on new highways. It might even have given Los Angeles the beginnings of a subway system. But the highway lobby's massive advertising campaign, cost \$333 445, succeeded in killing the measure. It wasn't until after the election that California's Department of Health revealed the disturbing fact that as many as 500 Los Angeles residents are killed every year by carbon monoxide from cars.

Los Angeles has something called a Rapid Transit District, but all it does is operate buses. The bus service is slow, costly, and (since commuting points are so far-flung in this spread-out city) impractical. Like most American cities, Los Angeles has seen the quality of its bus service decline as fares have gone up. But a growing number of cities are even worse off — they have no bus service at all, and school children, old people, the poor, the unemployed, and the handicapped simply have no way of getting from one place to another. About 125 US cities are now in this fix, and more than 250 transit operations have been abandoned since 1954. The only hope for the country's sick transit is Federal funding on a vast scale, and that would require revenues the Administration claims it just doesn't have.

Diamonds are for . . . what?

In a changing world, how lucky that we have public relations departments to remind us of our customs and duties. A recent handout, rushed to us from De Beers Consolidated Mines Ltd and headed "for immediate release", comes as a seasonal reminder that "LOVE IS . . . A DIAMOND". And love, we learn, means engagement, with 89 per cent of those wearing rings ("most engaged women") wearing diamonds.



In this pleasant situation it would seem unnecessary for the manufacturers to do more than sit back and wait for the timid husbands-to-be to creep into the shops. Sadly, this appears no longer an automatic procedure. Can it be that permissive couples are forgetting the diamond bit and whisking on impulse to the register office? What else prompts De Beers to inform us that "to become engaged before marriage is an accepted custom and pleases parents, friends and, of course, the man"? Or that the ring is "a gift of love which makes the marriage proposal definite", with diamond rings "particularly popular . . . for their symbolism and sparkle"?

Of course, having done without that engagement ring there's no knowing what you might pass up in the future. De Beers are particularly concerned

that that special occasion doesn't go by unmarked. Diamond jewelry "expresses appreciation for a successful marriage and many other emotions which a husband may have difficulty in putting into words". And if you do decide to use the diamond method, you won't be alone: "It is a happy fact that 28 per cent of women in this country own diamond jewelry . . . so British husbands obviously know how to please their wives."

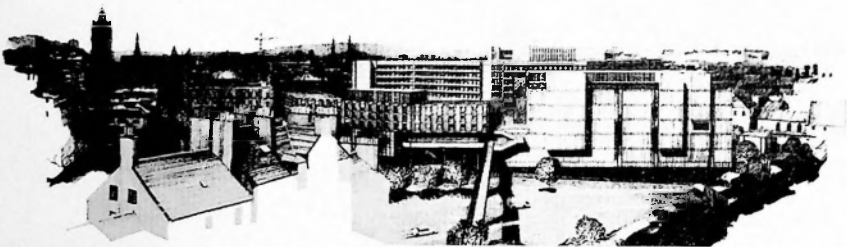
Your friendly household computer

After the dishwasher and the air-conditioner and the home entertainment centre comes the home computer. Several American families have one.

Small computers are the only bright bit of the computer market because they are now being fitted whole into other equipment — things like research instruments, steel mills, machine tools, aircraft and ships. The mini-computer has become a standard off-the-shelf item and its price is falling fast. What sold for £10 000 a few years ago sells for £3000 now and should drop to around £1000 in a few years time.

And at £1000 a mini-computer for the den of every split-level ranch-style seems perfectly practical. Programming is, the makers claim, as easy as punching a typewriter. The machine talks back at you in English, of a sort. And, the fantasies of film and tv land notwithstanding, mini-computers are completely devoid of twinkling lights and have fewer controls than a motor car.

They seem set to be the new status symbol to replace the woofers and tweeters of stereo-mania. A Washington engineer paid \$8500 for one of DEC's PDP8s and taught it to complete his tax returns, open garage doors and schedule his wife's weekly shopping. A Texas executive connected the stockmarket ticker tape directly to his machine and has it print out a daily analysis of his personal share portfolio. And luxury homes in Beverly Hills, California, can now be fitted with a \$15 000 computer for environmental control as an optional extra. The machine regulates water, light, heat and air conditioning.



Oxford Street in Edinburgh

If you climb Calton Hill at the east end of Princes Street, you command an almost unbroken panorama of Edinburgh and its environs. Turn slowly on your heel and, but for the eastern suburbs, you take in the whole of the city against a backdrop that stretches from Arthur's Seat to the Forth bridges and the Firth itself.

Edinburgh lies beneath you, more homogeneous than most cities of its size. True, the twentieth century has added a great deal to the skyline, but by and large, the scale has remained constant. Just below your vantage point, however, where James Square

and its satellite Georgian tenements used to stand, is the site on which a firm of commercial developers, blessed by Edinburgh Council, is engaged in creating the largest complex of shops, hotel and offices ever built in the city. It is still only a vast crater, dusty with demolition and noisy with reconstruction, and you can still see — though not for long — its nearest neighbour, Robert Adam's graceful Register House.

Professional Edinburgh is conservation conscious, and in the present case people are worried with good reason. For one thing it seems strange that so little publicity has been given to what ought long ago to have been a matter for the widest public discussion. James Square itself is a thing of the past,

unhappily (though it may have been past restoring, as the Council maintains) but what seems likely to take its place could be an environmental disaster of the first magnitude, so grossly out of scale with its surroundings that Oxford Street might seem its most likely context (see above).

Is it coincidence that, like St Andrew's House, that soulless monument to the worst the thirties could do in bland anonymity (or, for that matter like Argyll House which now straddles the New Town and the Old like a juggernaut) the new John Lewis's development will contain, in its concrete web of shops, offices, hotel, pedestrian bridges and underpasses, a great block of Government offices?

BABY BUSES FOR WEST END?



A new move to prise the motorist from London's streets comes in the form of a recently published report by a joint Department of the Environment, GLC and Westminster City Council working party on aids to pedestrian movement. Seizing the opportunities presented by forthcoming development in Covent Garden and the West End, the working party has rejected moving pavements and travelers in favour of further research and development on a system of small automatically controlled buses operating on a track integrated into the building structures. Running about 10ft above ground level the silent, fume free system may use two sizes of carriage for on and off-peak services, one carrying ten seated and ten standing passengers and the other six seated and eight standing, in one, two or three unit trains. For preserved buildings the track, support structures and carriage units would be light enough to be fixed to existing frontages.

In a route study, the working party presents a network connecting Charing Cross and Waterloo with six points in the Covent Garden area, a branch line to Holborn and the possibility of an extension loop through Soho, Piccadilly, Regent Street and Oxford Street. Stations, simple arrangements of up and down escalators with a ticket office platform, would be sited in major new buildings and at existing junctions with all but one of London's Underground lines. Illustrations in the report show possible three-level configurations with road traffic relegated to a floor below pedestrian precincts and the new track suspended above. According to Alan Dryer, Westminster deputy engineer and chairman of the working party, a pilot system could be working within ten years.

The Westminster proposals are in direct competition with the Cabtrack system currently being investigated

by the Government's Transport and Research and Assessment Group at RAE Farnborough. The working party rejected Cabtrack on the grounds that it would be difficult to integrate into areas where there is a large proportion of existing buildings. This is the essence of the RIBA's opposition to the Westminster scheme - a spokesman has argued that it would be impossible to disguise cabs in areas of historic interest. The Treasury, too, is known to favour additional through roads to a system that has to be justified on broader planning grounds.

Minsk headline

Design proposals for street furniture and for the distribution of bread will be discussed at a working seminar for professional designers to be held this month at Minsk in the USSR. The seminar has been organised by the ICSD Education Group and by VNIITE (All Union Research Institute of Industrial Design). About 15 foreign and 15 Russian designers will probably take part.

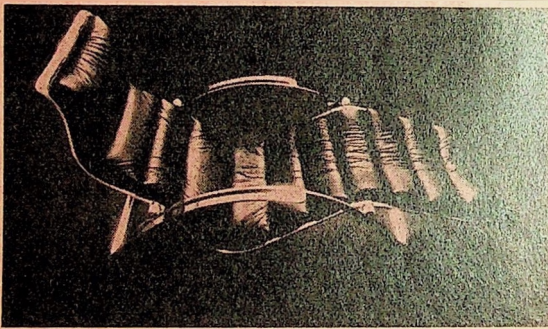
It is not clear how the two apparently random subjects of bread distribution and street furniture came to be chosen as projects for the seminar. The Bread problem concerns the process of loading, handling, distributing, displaying and finally selling all kinds of bread in self-service shops. This process, by comparison with the manufacture of the bread itself, is cumbersome and labour intensive. The aim of the study is to try and find ways of improving efficiency and hygiene, and thereby improving the lot of the distribution workers.

The street furniture projects will be tied to an experiment in one of the main streets of Minsk.

Duke's prize to rotate

The Duke of Edinburgh has decided to change the name and scope of his annual prize for design. From now on it will be known as The Duke of Edinburgh's Design Prize and will be governed by a new set of conditions. The main change is that the panel of judges will make their selection from one industrial category at a time, in order to rotate the award more fairly and also to encourage the various groups of industry. Four broad areas have been chosen and will be dealt with in the following order: 1972 - tableware, gifts and jewelry; 1973 - interior furnishings; 1974 - technical equipment and domestic appliances; 1975 - outdoor equipment and leisure goods.

Although the judges will be asked to look first at products which come into the category of the year, they may make another award to an exceptional design outside the annual category. The winner will continue to design or commission his own prize (below chrome and leather reclining chair designed for 1970 winner Patrick Rylands by Frederick Scott). The Duke of Edinburgh's Design Prize 1971 was won by Noel Haring, designer of the Teltron teaching machine (DESIGN 251/66-7).



DESIGN expands

From next month, DESIGN magazine will expand, taking in an entirely new section and increasing its coverage of graphics.

DESIGN's recent attempts to show more graphics have been welcomed, particularly as we are the only magazine to show graphics in the context of other design subjects. From June onwards there will be a graphics feature (one, two or three articles) in every issue. This section will include posters, advertisements, magazine design, etc; typography, packaging, technical information, illustrations; and media graphics.

A monthly section listing details of new products and materials will also start in June. This will be in addition to Things Seen and will be a regular information service to buyers, industrialists, designers, architects and engineers. At the same time the book review pages will also be increased.

The new cover price to take in increased costs as well as these enlargements, will be 35p. The last increase of the cover price of DESIGN magazine was in 1968.

AA School not to close this year

Student solidarity has saved the Architectural Association's School of Architecture at the eleventh hour, and the school will not now be closing at the end of the academic year. So the long application list for next year's student intake has been reopened, with candidates being sifted again last month. The immediate problem is to hoist the school out of the red. During the current year the school is expected to have over spent itself by around £60 000. Next year, the school reckons on trimming its running costs by £70 000 to achieve a surplus of £10 000. This will be achieved by subletting some accommodation, relying on student volunteer labour for cleaning and redecoration, and by employing a larger proportion of part-time staff.

It is not yet clear what the school's final relationship with the AA Council is likely to be. The school will be run by a board consisting of a staff and student representative from each year unit or department, but it will remain under the overall control of the AA Council until a new constitution for the AA has been drawn up.

British engineering needs action

A recommendation that the proposed Design Council to stimulate better engineering design in industry "should be taken off the shelf" was made in a recent discussion paper published by the National Economic Development Office. The paper, by D T N Williamson, director of research at Molins and a member of the Little Neddy for Mechanical Engineering, predicts a gloomy future for the British mechanical engineering industry unless remedial measures are swiftly taken.

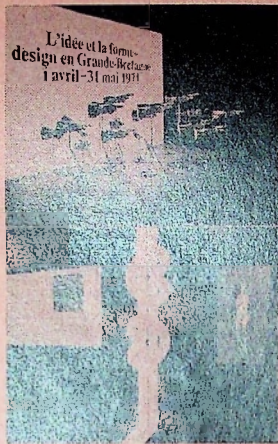
Among the measures recommended in the paper are: a levy on the lines of the Industrial Training Act to stimulate investment in new product development and new manufacturing techniques and methods; a wide extension of the Department of Trade and Industry's pre-production order scheme; and a close study of anatomy of the booming Japanese.

Not surprisingly, Mr Williamson urges that finance, both guaranteed by the Government and by the merchant banks will be required to bolster new company growth.

Well met in Paris

The exhibition of British design at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, has been attracting French visitors at a rate of some 500 a day. With a few exceptions, the response from the press (English and French) and from the public has been eager. Despite the recent announcement of the Conseil Supérieur de Création Industrielle, design is still regarded as a fringe activity in France, and the joint CoI/CoID exhibition underlines the enormous difference in attitudes on both sides of the channel.

In particular it points up contrasts in attitudes to design promotion in the two countries.

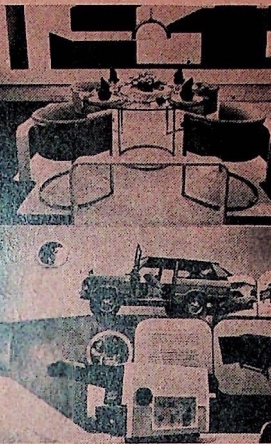


Leverhulme

The four Leverhulme travelling scholarships for 1971 (worth £700 each) have been awarded to below: Michael Hamblin (industrial design - engineering), Robin Harris (graphics), Joanna Bowring and Maggie Howell (textiles). A further award of £850 was made to Peter Goulds (post-graduate graphics). A record entry of 39 applications from 25 schools produced some good - if hardly outstanding - work in 3D and graphics; the Industrial Design (Engineering) side was again weak. The judging panel consisted of: Jack Howe; David Mellor; Brian Tattersfield; Marianne Straub; Robert Wetmore; and Martin Grierson.



On the one hand a confident display of CoID merchandise, laid out by Barry Mazur; on the other the rather meagre record of goods approved by the Centre de Création Industrielle. Design promotion in France - in which President Pompidou has now directly involved himself - clearly needs strong leadership and generous cash backing. But some spokesmen are doubtful whether the over-bureaucratic Conseil Supérieur and the under-financed CCI are the right bodies to provide this. The exhibition, designed by Theo Crosby, continues until the end of the month.



Younger, Thring and Macleod for SIAD

Sir George Younger, economic adviser to the Post Office Corporation, robot specialist Professor Meredith Thring and Norman MacLeod, deputy chairman ICI Plastics, will be three of the speakers at this year's SIAD conference, to be held at Chipping Camden from 4-6 June 1971. The conference will follow the agreeable pattern of previous years, with the Scuttlebrooke Wake in Chipping Camden Square and drinks with Sir Gordon and Lady Russell in the garden at Kingcombe. Summing up will be by John Christopher Jones, professor of design, Open University.

France's fortnight of protection

Nature Protection Fortnight, which takes place in France between 2 and 16 May, has been organised by the French Ministry of Environment. It serves as a timely reminder to Frenchmen that the ministry, set up as a sop to European Conservation Year, actually exists. Like other industrial nations, France has her share of pollution problems; but unlike them has managed to get on without a serious anti-pollution lobby. Whether the Minister of the Environment, Robert Poujade, will change all this remains to be seen.

So far his fledgling ministry has led a hand-to-mouth existence, with an underpaid, overworked staff scattered in dingy offices all over Paris. Poujade himself, whose appointment was

only announced last January, occupies rooms on loan from the French Admiralty which he has to vacate each time the admirals wish to entertain. It sounds a makeshift background for a ministry entrusted with the task of converting the big industrial polluters to cleaner and more civilised habits.

Nature Protection Fortnight, aimed mainly at schoolchildren, is a start, if only a modest one, along this hard road. A second move is the announcement of a watchdog committee on environmental matters, which is to count among its nine members Hubert Beuve-Méry, ex-director of *Le Monde*. Whether these two mild gestures are to be followed up by sterner ones, depends of course on the French Government and the cash support it is willing to provide.

Practical interiors

A report on the future training of interior designers, published recently, recommends that "the study period should extend over six years including a total of one or two years practical work and six months for the final thesis." The report, carried out for the International Federation of Interior Designers by the Norwegian professional institute (NIL) talks in vague terms about the content of the six year study period, but expects that "the trend will continue towards the total, integrated design of the environment" backed up by results of research on such subjects as sociology, psychology, product technology and production techniques.

On the relationship of interior design with architecture, the report says, somewhat guardedly, that "the training should take place in an artistic environment, albeit with the possibility of association with the architectural and technical environments where these special subjects have a bearing on their training".

New town boss

Fred Lloyd Roche, the newly appointed managing director of Milton Keynes Development Corporation, becomes one of the youngest, most highly paid and most powerful architect administrators in the country. Aged 40 he comes, the £10,000 post after only six months with the Development Corporation - as director of design and production. He took over on 1 April from Walter Ismay, who announced in his resignation statement that he would prefer to return to normal business life. Before joining the Development Corporation, Ismay was director and chief engineer of Yorkshire Imperial Metals and deputy chairman of Yorkshire Imperial Plastics.

Lloyd Roche has considerable depth of experience in planning new towns. He worked under Arthur Ling at Coventry, and was appointed chief architect and planning officer at Runcorn, also master-planned by Ling, in 1965.

Crying Wolfe

Buckminster Fuller, Tom Wolfe and Michael Murphy (of the Esalen Institute) will be three of the participants at this year's International Design Conference in Aspen, Colorado. The programme of the conference, which is entitled Paradox and takes place between 20-25 June, is being left deliberately vague; but discussion is likely to centre around social problems of the day, in particular communications, consciousness, sexual politics and the third world. Tom Wolfe, says programme chairman Dick Farson, has been called in "in case we begin to take ourselves too seriously."

Boyarsky's session

This year's Summer Session, organised by Alvin Boyarsky's International Institute of Design, will take place in London between 12 July and 20 August. The session will be open-ended, loosely structured and flexible. There will be workshops, seminars, lectures and special interest groups. The main purpose, says Boyarsky, is to match the resources of London with the interests of the participants, and create a market place where ideas, views and news can be exchanged. The faculty is expected to consist of some 80 students and about the same number of "experts" among whom Reyner Banham, Nicolas Habraken, Hans Hollein, Yona Friedman, Cedric Price, Brian Richards and James Stirling have agreed to attend. Tuition fees for the full six weeks are £100, but some scholarships are available. For further information write to Alvin Boyarsky, Director III, 28 Upper Park Road, London NW2 (telephone: 586 0671).

People

Joyce Mackrell has been appointed manager of CoID Training Services with responsibility for organising the Council's courses and conferences. She continues to organise retail training and will also be responsible for the Council's lecture panel and list of recommended films. Peter York, deputy head of Information Division CoID, takes on responsibility for the promotion of Design Index merchandise in retail stores at home and overseas.

Cedric Price has been invited to act as consultant for a teaching and information network based on North East London Polytechnic.

Giles Montagu-Pollock has been appointed managing director of Comart Associates.

Andrew Dempsey has succeeded Charles Gibbs-Smith as Keeper of the Department of Public Relations at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Sir Robin Darwin, Glascombe Manzu, Benedict Nicolson, Jean Renoir and Tapio Wirkkala are to be made honorary doctors of the Royal College of Art.

W J Bird has been elected president of the British Electrical and Allied Manufacturers Association.

Sir Frank Pearson has been appointed chairman of the Cusworth Lancashire New Town Development Corporation.

Michael Clapham has succeeded Lord King's Norton as chairman of the National Council for Academic Awards.

LONDON

WINDOW DISPLAYS AND DESIGN College of Distributive Trades, WC1	May 11-13
DOMESTIC TEXTILES Mount Royal Hotel, W1	May 9-13
KITCHEN COLOURWAYS De La Rue House, SW1	until May 14
A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE Roundhouse	until May 15
ART NOUVEAU TEXTILES Geffrye Museum	until May 16
PHOTOGRAPHS BY GERRY CRANHAM	until May 16
JOHN ROBERT COZENS	until May 16
DESIGN IN GLASS	May 18-June 9
THE DECORATED PAGE	May 5-October 10
THE FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR AND THE COMMUNE 1870-71 Victoria and Albert Museum	May 27-October 10
MARQUETRY	May 17-21
MODERN EMBROIDERY Foyles Art Gallery	May 26-June 11
INTERNATIONAL ELECTRONIC COMPONENT SHOW Olympia	May 18-21
INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL SECURITY AND SAFETY Royal Lancaster Hotel	May 18-21
SHOPEX Earls Court	May 17-21
NUCLEONIC INSTRUMENTATION US Trade Centre, SW1	May 17-21
INTERNATIONAL PLUMBING AND DOMESTIC HEATING Royal Horticultural Halls	May 17-22
TRIAL OF THE PYX Goldsmiths Hall	May 10-22
GIGI WALLNER Booty Jewelry New Bond Street, W1	May 11-22
KITCHEN FITTINGS Building Centre	May 6-28
CHelsea FLOWER SHOW Royal Hospital	May 25-28
DOUGLAS BINDER	May 4-30
KENNETH AND MARY MARTIN Whitechapel Gallery	
KEY TERRAIN drainage systems Reed House, SW1	May 3-31
GWYN HANSSEN ceramics Crafts Centre	May 3-31
ZEEP: PAOLOZZI new folio	until May 31
DEL PEZZO and ADAMI paintings DM Gallery, 72 Fulham Road	
VOLUNTARY HOUSING - TODAY AND TOMORROW RIBA, Portland Place, W1	May 26-June 1
ROBERT MORRIS Tate Gallery	until June 6
JESSE WATKINS open air sculpture Camden Arts Centre	May 13-June 6
ARTS AND CRAFTS FROM SIERRA LEONE	until May 9
CONTEMPORARY CRAFTS FROM HONG KONG Commonwealth Institute	May 27-June 27
FERDINAND HODLER 1853-1918	May 20-June 27
ARNOLD BOCKLIN 1827-1901	
HENRI LAURENS 1885-1954 Hayward Gallery	
EDWARD KIENHOLZ ICA, Nash House	May 25-July 18
ANNUAL SUMMER EXHIBITION Royal Academy	until July 25

THE DESIGN CENTRE 28 Haymarket, SW1

Designers at Work May 18-June 12

Christian Sell room settings, Cotton on Curtain Tracks

Motor Accessories, Spearwell Tools, Garden Books and Packs,

Sanderson Wallpapers Palladio Range all until June 5

Armstrong Cork contract carpets May 3-June 5

Cold Awards May 3-June 5

Teltron May 21-June 5

Sports and Outdoor Equipment May 3-July 3

SCOTLAND

SCOTTISH DESIGN CENTRE 72 St Vincent Street, Glasgow C2

Design Centre Awards until June 12

Sporting Life: equipment until July 3

Tourist Board exhibition May 17-July 31

Edinburgh IDEAL HOME

until May 15

ALASTAIR MICHIE, IAIN PATTERSON, JOHN BERGER,

May 8-29

ROBIN MACGREGOR Richard Demarco Gallery

WALES

Bangor BARBARA HEPWORTH Art Gallery

until May 9

Cardiff PICTURES FROM WELSH SCHOOLS

until May 23

GLASS TODAY National Museum

until May 23

Newport SNAP I Museum and Art Gallery

until May 29

REGIONS

Accrington CARTIER BRESSON Art Gallery

until May 16

Birmingham FOUNDRY EXHIBITION Bingley Hall

May 18-26

Brighton INCENTIVE MARKETING AND PREMIUM EXHIBITION May 10-13

Hotel Metropole

FIVE BELGIAN ARTISTS Sussex University

May 22-June 12

Bristol MARTIN FULLER paintings

until May 26

ROBYN DENNY screen prints Arnolfini Gallery

Canterbury MODERN PHOTOGRAPHY	until May 16
Harrogate INTERNATIONAL PHOTO CINE FAIR Crown Hotel	May 7-9
Hull 150 YEARS BY DESIGN Hammonds	until September 30
Leeds PETER DOWNING drawings. Park Square Gallery	May 5-29
NORTHERN IDEAL HOMES Queens Hall	May 22-June 5
Manchester BIG PAINTINGS FOR PUBLIC PLACES by 15 young artists, Whitworth Art Gallery	May 6-June 5
Newcastle BUILDING, PUBLIC WORKS AND FACTORY EQUIPMENT	May 15-22
Nottingham JOSEF ALBERS Victoria Street Gallery	until May 16
EXPERIMENTS	until May 15
FIVE BELGIAN ARTISTS	until May 22
SPACE WORKSHOPS work, Midland Group Gallery	May 28-June 19
Oldham ART NOUVEAU PEWTER Central Art Gallery	until May 23
Oxford SANNIE DREW paintings and drawings	until May 8
ANNUVERSARY EXHIBITION Caulfield, Hitchens, Hoyland Beer Lane Gallery	May 15-June 5
BILL BRANDT PHOTOGRAPHS	until May 15
MUSIC IN INDIAN PAINTINGS Museum of Modern Art	until May 26
PRIZEWINNING PRINTS FROM BRADFORD BIENNALE Oxford Gallery	May 19-20
Princes Risborough TIMBER TODAY AND TOMORROW	May 5-7
Rosborough NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL SAFETY	until June 6
SHANGHAI CHINESE EXPORT PORCELAIN Graves Art Gallery	until May 31
St Helens SAM HERMAN GLASS Pilkingtons Glass Museum	

MECHANICAL HANDLING SHOW	May 12-19
JACQUES MONOD contemporary graphics	until May 26
LIBER ET LA FORME: DESIGN EN GRANDE BRETAGNE Musée des Arts Décoratifs	until May 31

UNITED STATES	
Berkeley SOLERI University Art Museum	until June 13
Boston JACK LENOR LARSEN RETROSPECTIVE	until May 23
EXPERIMENTAL INDEPENDENT FILMMAKERS	until June 8
Chicago NATIONAL PACKAGING SHOW	May 3-6
New York TUBULAR WEAVINGS Jean Stamsta	until May 11
BODY JEWELRY Marci Zelmanoff	until May 11
CITY SENSES	until May 16
COSTUME STATEMENTS Museum of Contemporary Crafts	May 21-June 6
ROMARE BEARDEN	until June 7
RICHARD HUNT metal sculptures	until June 7
FREI OTTO	until September 30
TECHNICS AND CREATIVITY multiple art Museum of Modern Art	May 5-July 6
BLACK ARTISTS IN AMERICA	until May 16
ANDY WARHOL	until June 13
LYRICAL ABSTRACTION Whitney Art Museum	May 18-June 27

CONFERENCES/LECTURES/COMPETITIONS

Conferences *Creativity in Design* chaired by Ove Arup, speaker Ettore Sottsass, June 3-4, Stirling University; further details from Scottish Design Centre, 72 Vincent Square, Glasgow. *Conservation in Action*, July 8-9, details from the Civic Trust, 18 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1. *Corporate Identity*, September 22-23, details from BP Britannic House, London EC1.

Lectures *Telecommunications - Full Circle* by Professor E. H. Merriman, May 7. *The Survival of Species* by Peter Scott, May 14, and others. Details from The Royal Institution, 21 Albemarle Street, London W1.

Courses *Kitchen Equipment*, Tring, May 10-14; *Furniture*, Tring, May 17-21; *Pottery*, Tring, May 17-21, details from the Retail Section, CoLD, 28 Haymarket, SW1. *Urban Road Planning*, May 5-6; *Developments in Office Planning*, May 19-20; *Planning Techniques and Trends*, May 26-27; *Access for the Disabled*, June 2-3; *Car Parking*, June 9-10; details from CASE, Architectural Association, 34 Bedford Square, WC1. *Design for Economic Production*, June 7-12, *Plastics for Designers*, May 17-22, details from PERA, Melton Mowbray, Leics. *Summer School*, July 12-August 20, details from Alvin Boyarsky, International Institute of Design, 28 Upper Park Road, NW3. *Health Service Building Planning*, October 1, details from Raymond Moss, Medical Architecture Research Unit,

Northern Polytechnic, N7.

Competitions *Letterheading*, closing date May 31, details from the Better Stationery Council, 6 Wimpole Street, W1. *Horner's Award for best design for a plastic product to help road safety*, closing date June 30, details from A Hippius-Coxe, British Plastics Federation, 47 Piccadilly, W1. *Perring Travelling Scholarship* for retail furnishers, applications by October 20; *Ambrose Heal Award* for furniture industry, applications by November 7; *Radford Design Award* for furniture designers, applications by October 2, details from the Director General, City and Guilds of London Institute, W1. *Wallingford Castle Residential and Nursing Home*, registration by May 31; *Hebden Royd shops and residential accommodation*, applications by May 15; *Huddersfield Private Housing*, closing date September 6; *The Carpenters Award* for joinery, nominations by June 30; details from RIEA, 68 Portland Place, W1. *Prevention of Silicosis*, closing date November 1, details from Ente Nazionale per la Prevenzione degli Infortuni, Direzione Generale, Via Alessandria, Rome, Italy.

Films *Industry goes metric*, for hire from Central Film Library, Government Building, Bromyard Avenue, W3. *Concrete Practice - Placing and Compacting*, for hire from the Films Officer, Cement and Concrete Association, 52 Grosvenor Gardens, SW1.

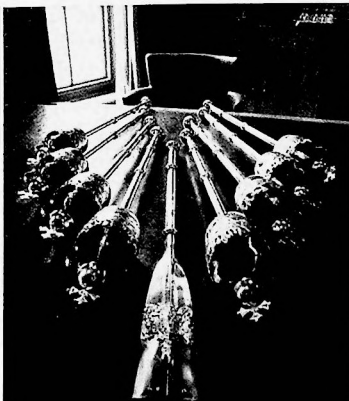
LOCAL GOVERNMENT DESIGN



Silver on the plate

Russell Miller investigates local weaknesses for the trappings of authority

Bristol is a city with more history — and more silver — than most others. A special constable holds one mace; the other eight, and an ear, are on the table



British town halls retain a penchant for pomp and paraphernalia which is rather touching in an age when both seem to matter less and less. A mayoral procession, with the mayor in his black cocked hat, scarlet robes, chain of office and lace stock, preceded by a suitably solemn town clerk, is a living example of the extent to which we as a nation worship tradition. And the local government tradition of welcoming, and sometimes even soliciting, gifts of silver and gold to adorn the mayor's chamber or the table at council banquets is a living example of the extent to which we as a nation worship the might of materialism.

Most town councils adopt a totally

indiscriminate attitude towards the corporation plate: that is to say that they are graciously pleased to accept whatever is offered to them, no matter how perfectly awful or absolutely useless the suggested gift is. The result is that most towns are the proud possessors of a rag-bag accumulation of precious junk — completely unrelated objects without merit of any kind as a collection. Yet the custom of presenting gifts to a town — usually practised by local industry, retiring mayors and the odd individual resident — represents a wonderful opportunity for putting together, on behalf of ratepayers, impressive and cohesive collections of real value.

A few of the more enlightened local authorities have recognised this opportunity. Reading, for example, which less than a decade ago had no corporation plate of any kind, now owns one of the finest sets of modern silver in Britain. They have managed it without cost to the ratepayers by means of a beautifully simple scheme eminently worthy of being adopted by other councils. Anyone who wants to make a gift to Reading is referred to Gerald Benney, the designer of their corporation plate. He tells them what the town still needs and the donor makes a choice according to how much he wants to spend.

Such a scheme needs a strong-minded council behind it. On several occasions Reading has had to refuse gifts not designed by Benney at the risk of embarrassment on both sides. But the advantages are considerable — the town's collection is a superb investment which is still growing. The Goldsmiths' Company, who helped set up the scheme by putting the council in touch with Benney, were hoping that other local authorities would soon follow Reading's lead. Unfortunately it hasn't happened on any worthwhile scale. "The vast majority of corporation plate is still nothing more than collections of mostly unrelated bits and pieces," John Houston, curator of the Goldsmiths' Hall, says. "It seems that aesthetics don't come into it much when someone is making a gift to the town."

Obviously the scheme would not work for all councils. Leicester, for

example, are too busy trying to get back all the silver which the council sold in a fit of pique more than 100 years ago. When the town's self-elected council was kicked out by the Municipal Reform Act of 1835, the new council decided that Leicester's corporation plate was an unseemly and vulgar display of wealth, so they sold the lot. The town has been trying to get it back ever since. Some of it has turned up in the possession of other towns and has been returned to Leicester on permanent loan and the mace was discovered hanging above the bar in a pub.

In fact, no town has the legal right to use ratepayers' money for buying plate, a minor embarrassment which hinders few of them. Leicester get round the problem by calling their purchases "museum specimens" and some towns increase the mayor's salary so that he can buy them a little nick-nack at the end of his term of office.

It would not be difficult to spend a lifetime in one town without ever catching sight of the corporation silver. The insignia — the chains, badges and maces etc that are the signs of office — would be harder to miss, particularly if you lived in Bristol. Bristol's insignia comprises four swords, nine maces, a silver oar, a cap of maintenance, a chain and badge for the Deputy Water Bailiff, four silver chains for the City Waits, two silver trumpets, the Lord Mayor's chain and badge and the Lady Mayoress's chain. With nine maces, Bristol even puts the City of London in the shade, who can only boast two — one of them collapsible for travelling.

The new towns understandably and sensibly don't even attempt to compete with all this finery. At Cumbernauld they have only just got to thinking about getting a gold chain of office for the Provost and a modern design has been commissioned from a local silversmith. The only insignia at Harlow in Essex is a simple chain of office, which the present chairman of the council treats with a suitable lack of reverence by wearing it on local protest marches against the Government's Industrial Relations Bill.

Aldermen and councillors on about

half of the councils in Britain still wear robes, although some of them only for special occasions. There is no standard design or colour, either for robes or hats. Many aldermen and councillors are obliged to buy their own robes, which can be a bit of a blow if they are like those worn by City of London aldermen and lined with fur.

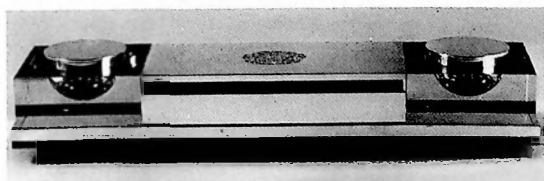
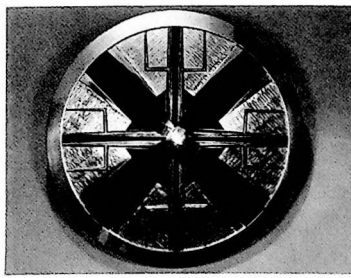
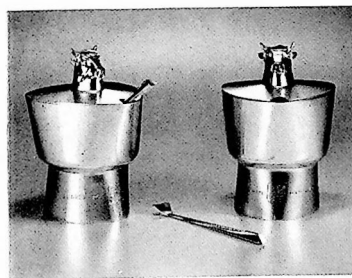
Robes are something of a sore point in Huntingdon right now, where it is a council standing order that all councillors and aldermen shall wear robes. When two members decided to make a protest against what they considered to be a pointless and outdated order and turned up for a council meeting without their robes they were immediately ruled out of order and told they could take no part in the proceedings.

Huntingdon is a good example also of the rather uneasy amalgamation of traditions that was necessary after the last round of local government reorganisation. Huntingdon was merged with Godmanchester into one authority, which was fine except that each had its own mayoral chain and badge and mace. It was a problem that might have been best resolved by commissioning a new design for the merged authority's insignia. Instead they reached a wonderfully British compromise — the two mayoral chains and badges are worn alternately to council meetings and at outside functions the chain appropriate to that part of the borough is worn. The Huntingdon mace is used at Council meetings because, to the undoubted chagrin of Godmanchester, their mace doesn't fit the cradle in the Huntingdon council chamber.

This somewhat clumsy solution to the problem of merging traditions with towns is typical of what happened throughout the country. Towns cling to their traditions like limpets, which is why mayoral processions are still surrounded by swords, cars, wands, banners, halberds and staves carried by attendants, wardens, beades, town criers, bailiffs, high constables, bellmen and sergeants.

It is why the mayor of South Shields always takes a silver snuff box to all meetings of the Council and it is why in Newark, despite selling off some of the silver in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when the town was a bit short of ready cash, the mayor still carries a wand presented by a local vicar in 1617. The vicar originally had the wand fitted with a sharp spike in one end so the Mayor was able to defend himself if necessary.

Some people might think, with justification, that getting mayors done up like characters from Gilbert and Sullivan is taking tradition too far. Is there any real point in it? "Yes indeed," said a spokesman for the Association of Municipal Corporations. "If for example at a big county gathering, like the funeral of a Lord Lieutenant in the cathedral, a mayor was to turn up without his robes and chains he might feel a bit lost in the crowd or be asked to stand with the chairman of the urban district councils. He might be very put out."



Above: mustard pots made for Norwich by David A Thomas. Above right: bowl centrepiece (plan view) for Ipswich by Gerald Benney. Right: inkstand for Leicester by Robert Welch

At an exhibition earlier this year in the Guildhall to promote Sheffield as a changing city, the lord mayors gather, the usual welcoming rituals proceed. It may be all change in Sheffield but on this sort of occasion very little has altered.



Photographs by Kelvin Chung

SUNDERLAND

THE TOWN HALL AS A WORKING UNIT

Sunderland's town hall and civic centre, designed by Sir Basil Spence, Bonnington & Collins, is unassuming, ingenious and practical. Robert Waterhouse reports on how it's likely to affect the town

Is it a coincidence that Sunderland's new town hall and civic centre follows closely on that of Newcastle-upon-Tyne? Competition between Wearside and Tyneside is as fierce as ever, with the impending local government reorganisation giving Sunderland numerically equal standing beside Newcastle in the metropolitan authority. And if anything is likely to prove to outsiders that Sunderland knows how to look after itself it is the town hall, perhaps the first in Britain to be built as a down-to-earth working unit and therefore in complete contrast to Newcastle's hybrid palace.

The site designated for the complex was West Park, an open hilly space rising south from the town centre and west of Mowbray Park. A pre-war Act of Parliament had given Sunderland the authority to build on West Park, for even then the existing town hall (built 1890) was quite inadequate as an administrative centre and departments were spread inefficiently all over town. However, the war brought extensive bombing, aimed at shipyards and pit heads but managing to damage 20 000 houses, so it wasn't until the late fifties that the council got round to thinking again about accommodation for its own staff (now about 900 strong). The immediate belief was that the existing site, at under nine acres, was not big enough and that it would be great to include some five acres of Mowbray Park. There was a public enquiry, and the decision went against the council.

This seeming setback was probably the beginning of today's successful building. It concentrated the forward planners' sights on a realistic job rather than a prestigious fantasy so that in their preliminary brief they had the good sense to stipulate that over half of the public departments should have ground level access. Jack Bonnington, partner in charge for Sir Basil Spence, Bonnington & Collins (appointed architects in 1964) was quick to realise that a building grouped round courtyards would best fulfil the brief.

The formula devised after detailed user surveys was of two hexagon-shaped courts two storeys high linked by a four-storey central core (itself necessarily a hexagon), flanked on the north (town) side by a multi-storey car park and on the south by the civic centre. This allowed the departments most used by the public not only to be at ground level but to have their own separate entrances from the courtyards, meaning



quick, uncomplicated access for those going to pay rates or visit the children's department while protecting the back-stage office areas from casual intrusion — once people understood the system.

Based on a 5ft triangular grid, the concrete structure is supported by columns spaced at 20ft intervals round equilateral triangles. These can be seen exposed in the main entrance hall or sprouting from the underbelly of the ground floor level as one walks up to the building from the car park. They allow corners and levels to be assimilated at will, and thus provide for the structure's basic success: its change of level and pace, making the most of a rocky and difficult site while keeping within the strictest simplicity of exterior and interior materials.

Outside, in fact, the main visible element is a brown brindled engineering brick for the building's plinth, matched by complementary tiles as cladding on the industrialised concrete wall panels. The same tiles are used throughout the steps and terracing, and in the public spaces inside. Some 200 different shapes of tile give variety to walkways, and in all more than two million individual pieces of tile and brick were supplied by Hawkins Tiles (Cannock) Ltd. The only other exterior materials are glass, aluminium window surrounds and the concrete of pillars and honeycomb understructure — apart from the copper

roof of the council chamber and the Cor-Ten louvers on the plant room which tops the central core.

It is inside this core that the building pivots, with a well opening out visibly the logic of the planning and allowing access to departments not served by ground floor entrances. The well has become a sort of whispering gallery in reverse, where people meet on the first or second or third floors to discuss together while watching others move around the reception desk on the ground floor. The acoustics are such that nobody is overheard but everybody is part of a workmanlike hum.

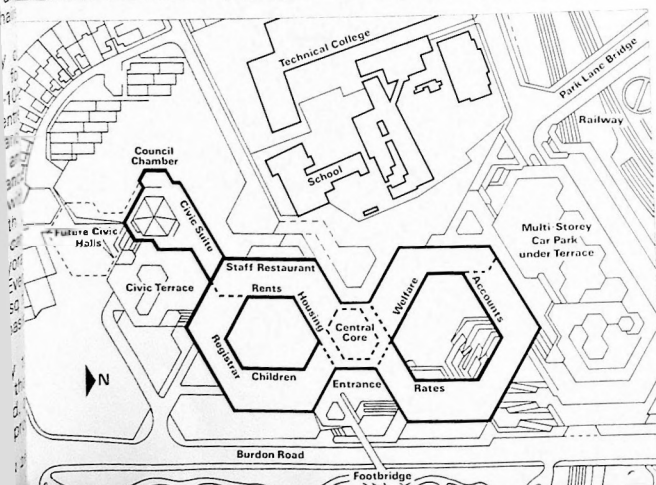
Beyond the immediate steps and galleries of the well the tiles stop and the enclosed offices begin, guarded by reception areas which are sometimes partitioned off from the main office space, sometimes left as a gaping window for the inquisitive; the choice is that of the particular department. All walls within the offices and office staff corridors are non-structural, so the building could be stripped to its shell and begun again if necessary in the distant future. But this would prove expensive, especially since modular storage space, a system developed by the architects and built for them by Flexiform Carson, has been set into walls backing onto corridors (though on a knock-down principle). Most of the interior surfaces, including all wall panels, are lined in ash grey Waverite melamine laminate. Corridors and offices, originally to be carpeted with cork-backed pvc were eventually fitted with a warm orange nylon felt from Scandinavian Flooring Distributors. Most of the office furniture, basic but practical, was also developed and designed by the architects and built by Flexiform Carson with chairs from Hille.

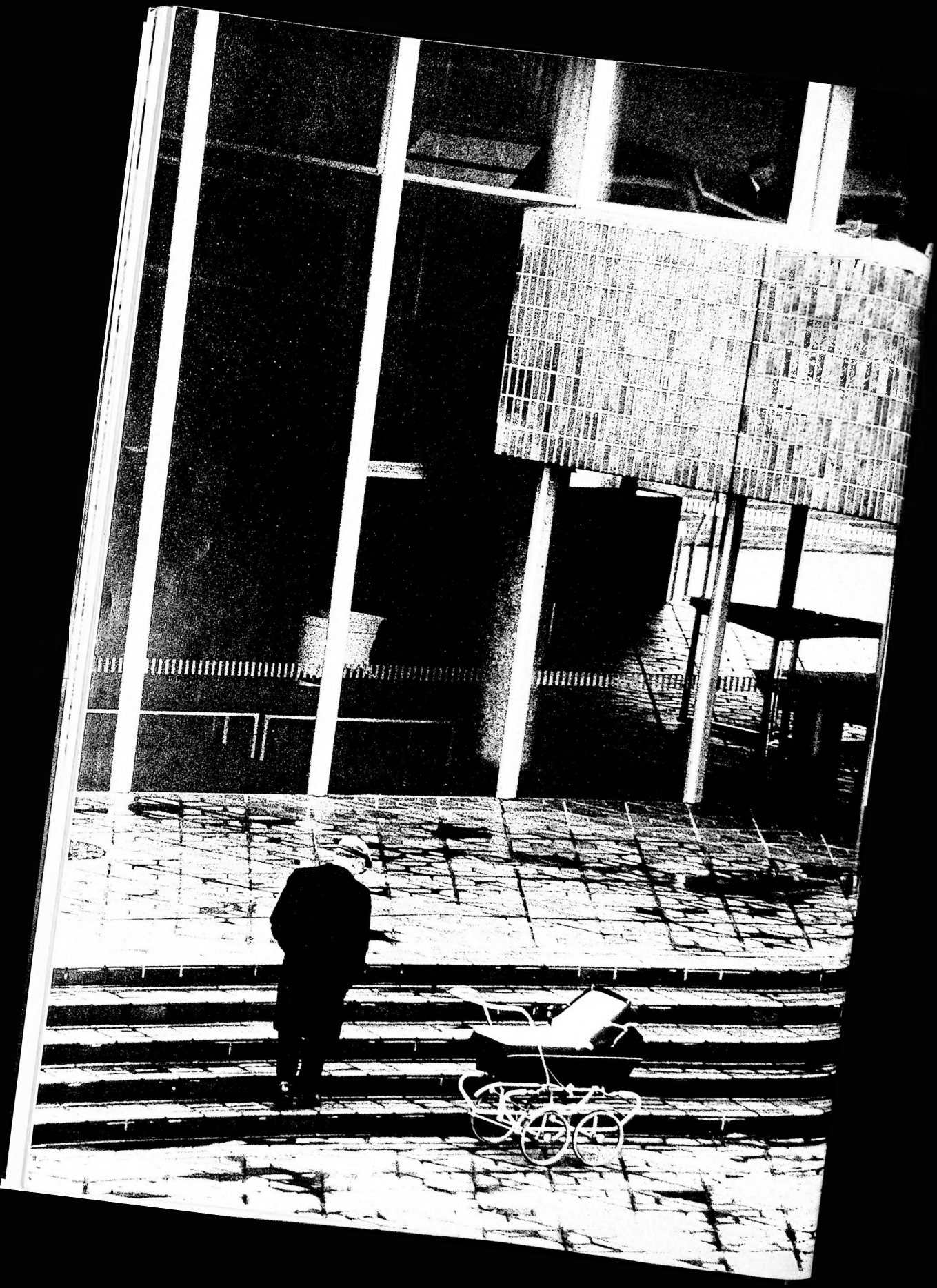
So, throughout, there's a unity of materials which naturally made for quality at reasonable costs (from £7.10-£8.25 sq ft complete). The civic centre end is more expensive — with its anodised aluminium chain curtains and Rotatlex candelabra in the entrance area, its council chamber equipped with press-button voting and lined with a Columbian pine ceiling, its Wilton carpeted committee rooms and its mayoral suite furnished by Herman Miller. Even so, the cost was kept to about £3 sq ft more than the offices, and the basic components are still dominant.

The architects had all the way to satisfy their hard-headed clients that they were getting what they wanted, at the right price. It was felt that, for a pro-



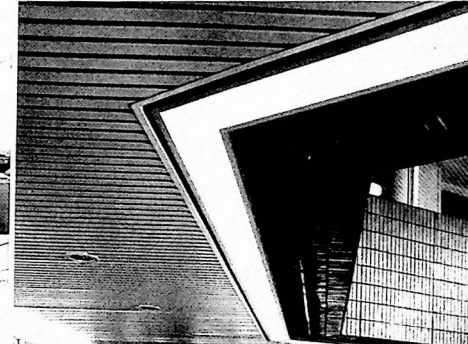
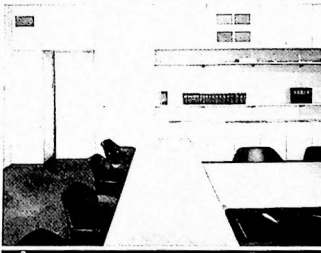
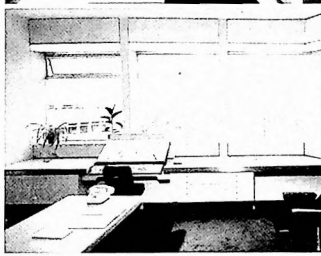
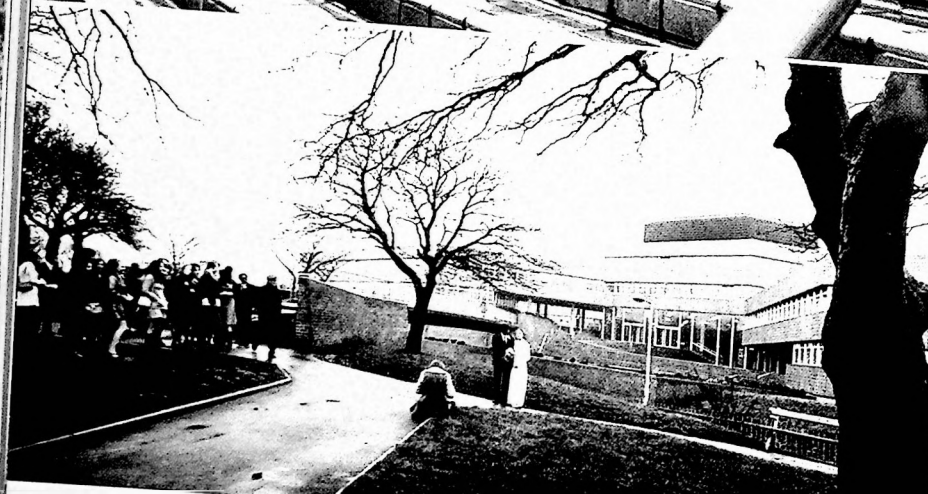
Seen from a tower block in the town centre, above, the town hall is an imposing fortress rising from the railway lines. A multi-storey car park dominates the approach (view from car park terrace back into town, opposite) as it does from Burdon Road left, which may be closed to traffic in the future, leaving the town hall and Mowbray Park precinct. The park is linked across by a footbridge, right





Outside and inside the central core. Brown brindled engineering tiles serve as exterior cladding and paving, and for interior surfaces in public areas. From the ground floor, steps and lifts lead to the three upper floors, with departments opening off the landings. Balconies are used for private conferences or simply for watching the world go by (not encouraged for staff). The public, though, can study staff at work in offices opening over and beside entrances





The architects have taken full advantage of the change in levels over the site. Not only are steps everywhere, but the south hexagon is one storey higher than the north, giving a subtle variation in perspective which helps break up the heavy tile cladding of the exterior walls. Steps lead from the central core down onto Burdon Road at two points. Ramps, heated in winter, allow circuitous access for mothers with prams. Inside the south court is the register office, where confetti is still allowed. Wedding parties can use special stairs from an underground car park and go across the

pedestrian bridge to Mowbray Park for photographs to be taken. All this while the everyday life of the town hall continues — excellent, except that the offices are no more noiseproof than any others with single glazing.

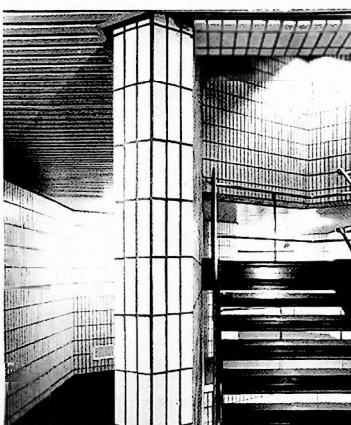
Public areas within the town hall are mostly on the ground floor with their own entrances, like the rates hall, above, and the housing department, top. Floors are finished in the same engineering tile used outside. The entrance hall, in the central core bottom left is open and accessible, but rather imposing if you approach it from below. In the council offices everything works to a system, with desks and storage developed by the architects and made to measure by Flexiform Carson, who have since introduced similar ranges on the market. The system, finished in ash grey Warente laminate, allows considerable flexibility — it contains no structural elements. Storage itself is knock-down. Carpeting, except in principal offices, is a warm orange nylon felt. Chairs are from Hille



ject that had been long on the cards. Sunderland was not very ready with vital information. On the other hand, Sunderland felt that they were paying the architects for the brief as much as the design, and that it was their job to make both satisfactory. Both parties agree that their relationship was friendly and fruitful, yet there are minor points where they begged to differ. Over signing, for instance. Jack Bonnington proposed a system, relying on strategic plans of the complex, showing how to find numbers and names above individual entrances. In the first few months the town hall was open it proved so difficult for people to find their way around that the local architects' department improvised a motorway-type system and substituted it for the plans. Then there was the question of corporate image: it seemed logical to the architects that a new town hall called for a new logo, carried through to council vehicles, notepaper, etc. Sunderland thought otherwise. A typical reaction, from a man who had fully accepted the building, was: "we don't need a symbol. That's a symbol" (pointing to the existing coat of arms) "that's registered and means something. Why should we look like British Rail?" However, the argument continues among council officers.

Lack of full cooperation between town hall departments possibly let the architects down in their actual siting of the building. At one stage it was proposed that Burdon Road, which separates the town hall from the park, would be closed to traffic, creating a wide precinct area. Unfortunately, the timing of the town's traffic plan is such that there is now no immediate hope of closing the road (which takes most of the traffic to Teesside) and people who work in offices fronting it complain about trucks grinding past in low gears. It may also be eventually found that double glazing would have been worth the extra cost for the windows facing into the courtyards. Everyday occurrences, like the wedding that was brightening a wet March morning, could prove unnecessarily distracting to office workers. It's a little ironic that the building is vulnerable to outside noise when inside surfaces are so carefully covered. Indeed, the committee rooms in the civic centre – away from streets or courtyards – are so quiet that a hiss has been built in to prevent embarrassment.

Whether Burdon Road closes to traffic or not (and the planners say it will) the town hall is extremely conspicuous of the motor car. Councillors and senior staff have their own convenient car parks under the building, while visitors, less fortunate staff and townspeople use the enormous four-floor, 72-car stadium on the north side. If you happen to be down in the town centre by the library, this car park is the only bit of the building you see so it seems fair to ask whether the motorist really is as important as all that. The answer is complex. First, most of the car park was bonus, built over railway lines and old roads, not part of the designated site. Secondly, this same set of lines, most of which still exist separating the town hall



Interior photographs by Mark Swales

At the extreme south of the complex the civic centre sits, restrained and aloof. The entrance foyer has anodised aluminium chain mail curtains and a Rotaflex

candelabra; the council chamber, a Columbian pine ceiling; committee rooms are furnished by Westnofa and Form International, service staircases are white tiled

from the town, will eventually be built over and the gap joined. Thirdly, the car park is just one in a strategic series standing by ready for an invasion when cars are banned from the town centre. If that ever becomes a reality, the scheme will justify itself. For the moment, the space is desperately under used and must annoy pedestrians struggling past on their way to the town hall. One also has the feeling that the extensive terraces on the car park roof were a planning sop to make it look like a community measure; certainly, the whole building abounds in terraces and one more or less can't really have mattered.

If you haven't a car you can catch a bus from town to Park Lane Bridge and then have a relatively level walk through over the car park. If it's raining, though, that's quite a long walk without cover. The other alternatives – two entrances from Burdon Road – involve enormous flights of steps (or circuitous ramps, heated against ice) which are still without cover. These steps, beautiful as they undoubtedly are to the camera, could be a curse if you were old or in a hurry. In retrospect, they form the strongest part of the case that was put by the local civic society, for siting the town hall in the centre of town, on the level. On the other hand, without its numerous changes of level, without its majestic steps, the building would lose much of its character and most people seem to enjoy the challenge of getting up the hill: for those who don't, an alternative system (escalators?) might be studied.

Is this celebration of natural contours and veneration of the motor car at the expense of the pedestrian an indication that although the shape has changed, the concept of the town hall has not? Is Sunderland, in its own modest way, just as derisive of ordinary people and their needs as were the Victorian monuments to mayoral dignity? It seems fair to say no since, once arrived at the building, visitors are treated well, don't have much queueing and evidently enjoy themselves. Staff, united in one building for the first time, are using each others' skills and clerical efficiency has improved by about a quarter.

However, this wasn't a cheap building. Some £3½ millions are a lot to spend on administrative efficiency in a town of only 220 000 with unemployment running at about three times the national average. And, because of its site, the town hall can't in itself put new heart into a run-down town centre which – despite a recent large scale scheme of flats let at "economic" rents above a pedestrian shopping precinct – largely lacks restaurants, pubs, common open spaces and other places to relax and enjoy life. The council have plans for a kind of Billingham Forum, which they hope will in turn create the demand for pubs, etc. They say that they cannot be expected to set up in commercial activities. Maybe it is simply a matter of being patient, of waiting for each problem to be sorted out. Meanwhile the town hall sits proudly on its hill, proof of what can be done when you have the land. Let's hope that the authority can do as well for those who live or work below it.

Billingham revisited

In 1967 the Forum, Teesside's all-purpose sports and recreation centre, opened amid great publicity. Robert Waterhouse went to see what it's like now

Billingham town is now part of Teesside County Borough; Billingham Forum, though receiving a large subsidy from the county council, is an independent charitable trust, answerable to its own board. The feeling is in Billingham that the Forum community and sports centre was built just in time. The town, with a population of only 35 000, would have been lucky to have received a recreation complex costing about £1 million under Teesside's jurisdiction. More recent projects like the Pavilion at Thornaby and Stockton's swimming pool give ammunition to this argument; admirable though they are, they don't have the scale and cross-section of the Forum. But, then, the Forum, opened in July 1967, is still unique in Britain and remarkable in a region of local authority enlightenment.

First discussed in 1960, the idea behind the Forum was to give Billingham a recreational focus which would help ensure that the new town centre – unlike others – would not be purely commercial, and would not close down each evening when the shopkeepers locked up. Because it was the first centre of its kind in Britain, and being built by a smallish urban district council, the project went ahead after limited research – though with a great deal of confidence and purpose. It was the belief of the councillors that extensive facilities for indoor sport and recreation – and equipment hired at very moderate prices – would attract enormous participation. They were not wrong: in the first 17 weeks there were nearly half a million paid admissions.

The new town, including the Forum, was the responsibility of Billingham Urban District Council, who employed Elder, Lester & Partners as architects for the whole scheme. By local, even national, standards, Billingham UDC was disgustingly rich, largely thanks to ICI and other boom industries. A rate of one old penny fetched £13 000 in 1968, the year of the Teesside takeover, while it brought in only £78 000 for the whole of Teesside. In addition, Billingham councillors, inspired by the now legendary Fred Dawson, were prepared to vote a 6d rate for recreation. Which meant that this small town became the proud possessor of – apart from the Forum, bristling with sports equipment – a social hall on every estate, a community centre at the campus school/technical college, a council-owned night club, some 13 working men's clubs, and (nothing to do with the council) extensive sports facilities at



ICI. Little wonder that Billingham draws custom not only from Teesside and the North-east, but from places as far away as Leeds and Manchester.

Now that it's all established, with yearly paid admissions to the Forum averaging out at something around one million, that doesn't mean to say that the place is running itself. In the financial year ending March 1970 it received a total grant of over £200 000 from Teesside (or the equivalent of a 2½d rate) and seems likely to demand increasing amounts – staffing, with the Forum open nearly 100 hours a week, is evidently labour intensive. So one can understand Teesside's reluctance to commit themselves to another Forum.

The Forum, then, is a community centre for which the community pays. But does it really serve the community as a whole? Built with a heavy emphasis on sport and physical recreation, most people who use the Forum are under 25

and very few are over 60. Only about one third are non-participants – which isn't surprising because the provisions for spectating are not good, and there are better places to eat or drink than in the Forum's bars and restaurant which, being above the swimming pool, come within the "chlorine belt". In fact, the swimming pool is easily the most popular item, with the skating rink following second. This is let out to a commercial management who are making it pay (there's a lesson for someone). Originally, the ice rink, with seats for over 1000 spectators, was meant to double as a sports hall. Under the ice was a bitumen floor; however, one day of professional tennis ruined the floor, which has not been replaced. So sports with great spectator potential like 5-a-side soccer have to be played in the 120ft x 60ft sports hall upstairs, where a small, unsatisfactory gallery has been improvised. The pressure from 5-a-side teams is so

FORUM



While interior finishes are generally standing up well for a cheap building (less than £1 million), there have been extravagant mistakes at the Forum. The ice rink was meant to double as a sports hall but the floor under the ice barely survived one tennis tournament. So all that seating is scarcely used, while the purpose-built sports hall is much too small for spectator events. The crèche, an addition, is popular and overcrowded. The need for ticket offices etc recently installed in the foyer, should have been foreseen. In fact, marginally fewer people use the Forum now than in its first year.



great that the Forum's director, G G Bott, would dearly love to build a separate hall across the road – if money were available. As it is, he has to resist the temptation of block booking the hall for soccer, which would exclude other, more individual activities.

It wasn't until late in the design of the Forum that the space designated for "culture" was given over to a theatre, and the theatre, opening after the other parts of the building, has had its problems. Last year it received over £70 000 in grants from Teesside, the Northern Arts Association and the Arts Council. But even that, sizeable by regional standards, was unable to support a repertory company. Productions are now on a piecemeal basis, relying on names and commercial travelling shows – some of which the theatre originates itself. Mr Bott has become convinced that the local audience (which he himself estimates at the threequarters of a million

people within a 15-mile radius of the Forum) does not want a repertory company. It may be that the theatre – which has to be entered through the Forum – suffers from its proximity to all that sport. Certainly, the case for putting the two side by side is unproved at Billingham, though probably the odds were stacked too heavily against the theatre from the outset, and it has never been given a fair chance to prove itself. Repertory theatre is today surviving in much less promising places.

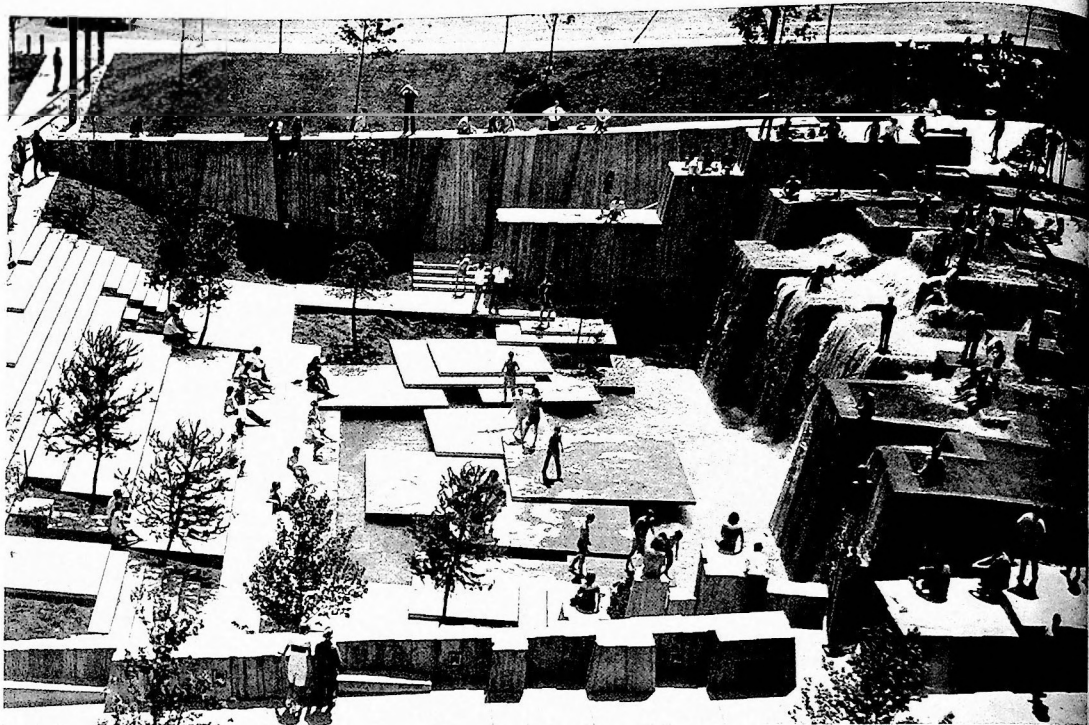
It is in this polarisation – sport or theatre (sometimes films) – that the narrowness of the Billingham concept is manifest. True, the Forum was built to an amazingly low budget, and the fact that everything came under one roof undoubtedly made it possible. But, by its tight division of space to many separate participant activities, the architects left no provision for alternative use. A survey, carried out last year Margaret

Spellman of Leeds University, showed a considerable demand amongst young people for a discotheque – and for areas where they could simply sit around, chat and pass the time without having to buy anything or participate. And although the management tries hard to make it seem otherwise, the presence of those large halls, one filled with water, one with ice, plus the gym-type sweat coming from the smaller halls, creates a spartan, non-conformist atmosphere. There is not at the Forum, as there is at the similar Dronten Agora in Holland (DESIGN 241/40-46) a relaxed mingling between ages, sexes and interests. This isn't to say that whole families don't use the Forum – they do, and they come for the day just as they would go to the seaside or the zoo. But man's (and especially the Teessider's) flexibility has to improvise what the building lacks.

The difference between Dronten and Billingham is that whereas at the Forum all spaces are clearly defined for distinct uses (although a lot of doubling up goes on in the sports halls) at the Agora all activities, including a theatre, take place within one space. Now, of course, squash, archery, bowls – not to mention swimming and skating – need their own private areas to be safe and enjoyable. But the relative lack of emphasis on sport at Dronten allows people such communal practices as dancing, meetings, tv on an enormous screen, or simply relaxing together.

Architect Alan Ward of Elder Lester was asked to design a building to which parts could be added or taken away as necessary. It might have been predicted that, once completed, the Forum was not likely to undergo much change. In nearly four years there have been no structural alterations; a few rather ungainly kiosks have been added at the entrance to take ticket offices etc, and a fine theatre workshop has been improvised across the way in what was a commercial tyre depot. Otherwise, the only physical change to the Forum has been the closing off of the road in front, with sensible pedestrianisation linking it even closer to the town centre.

Mr Bott is not unaware of his problems. He looks from his office longingly at the open space 100yd away and declares that he would love to see the Forum torn down and rebuilt there before it is well and truly obsolescent. "Why not plan for obsolescence?" he suggests, "by being able to move the building back and forwards between sites", but admits that in the present financial climate there is not much chance of that solution. His special interest is gymnastics, but the mixed fortunes of the theatre, for instance, exercise much more of his time and energies. He feels that the basic problem is to distinguish between sport, recreation and leisure. Sport seems to be the outright winner at Billingham, with leisure trailing somewhere behind recreation. The Forum suffers from being a pioneer in the field. As such, it has been amazingly successful; it has paved the way for more balanced and adaptable developments, if other councils ever have Billingham's foresight.



PLAY SPACES—2 Portland falls

While local authorities in Britain are adept at demolishing the old they are not particularly accomplished at replacing it with something comparable or better, particularly if the new object has no more obvious purpose than to keep a few school kids and dropouts off the streets. The sad rule of thumb guide is that if the project isn't practical (car parks ??) or lucrative (supermarkets ??) it won't get off the ground. Mammon is all powerful, even in such seemingly innocuous and delightful places as St Austell or Hereford.

Which makes the American system of development commissions seem increasingly attractive. Something like the deceased Land Commission but with much greater powers, development commissions have the right by US law to buy up and piece together parts of towns (usually the decaying inner belt), using compulsory purchase. The commission then provides the infrastructure, the local authority the basic services and roads and commercial speculators the buildings (including rehousing at similar prices as before).

Obviously, the success of a scheme will depend on the enthusiasm of the local authority and the toughness of the development commission. Portland, Oregon, luckily has both. Over the past few years a walkway has been created linking the downtown area with woods some half a mile away. Along this walkway are three planned open spaces—the Lovejoy Plaza with pools to pass through, Pettigrove Park with three

grassy hummocks to lie on, and now the Auditorium Forecourt Fountain, a mini-Niagara into which, if you're intrepid, you walk.

The San Francisco landscape architects, Lawrence Halprin & Associates, are responsible for the whole chain. Halprin, in London recently to address the RIBA, says that the fountain was planned in full knowledge that it is potentially dangerous. Maximum drops are 18ft, and 13 000 gallons of water churn over each minute. Nevertheless, as the photographs show, little kids paddle happily not far from the brink and young teenagers play tag up through the levels. In fact, the face of the fall is sloped, and the one person who is known to have gone over the top emerged unscathed below. Water is switched on at 11am (a daily event) and off in the evenings. The falls are great for early morning sun bathing.

Halprin has been fascinated with water all his life, and spends his summer vacations walking in the High Sierra, which is full of fast mountain streams. The forecourt fountain is an attempt to recreate these streams and rock pools, not just to be looked at but to be used. Portland wanted a big gesture for their civic auditorium forecourt, and they got it, putting the rather flaccid auditorium very much in the shade. The fountain wasn't cheap (about half a million dollars) but Halprin, once his mind is set on something, admits to being stubborn, if not intransigent. "There's not much you can do except fire me."



PLAY SPACES—3

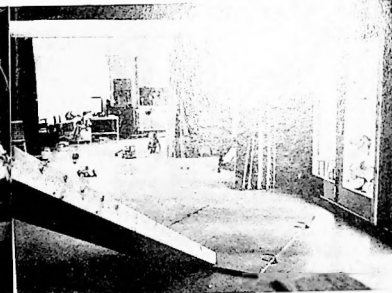
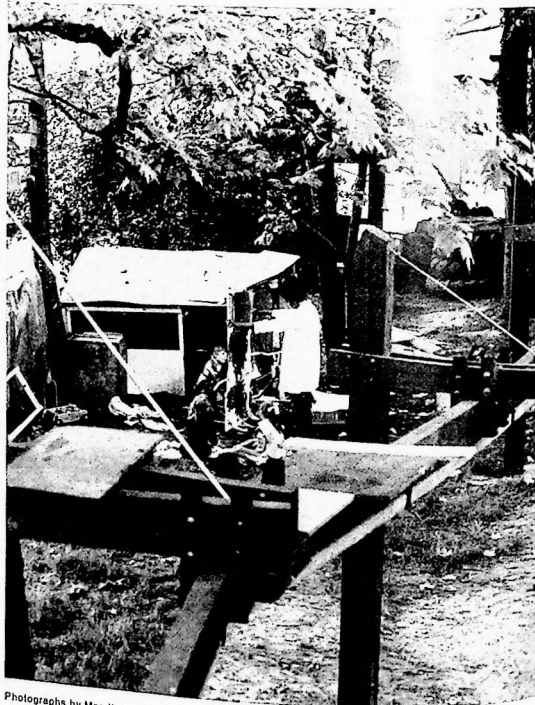
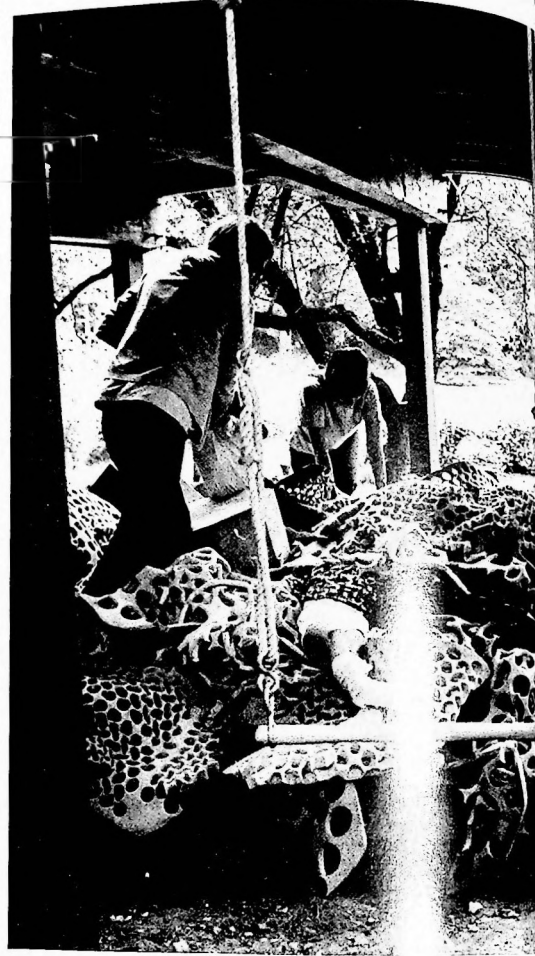
Adventures for the handicapped

Though equipment — and forward thinking — is inadequate for the special needs of handicapped children in many parts of the country, the design of adventure playgrounds is one hopeful experiment.

Ilse Gray looks at projects in which voluntary societies and local authorities are participating

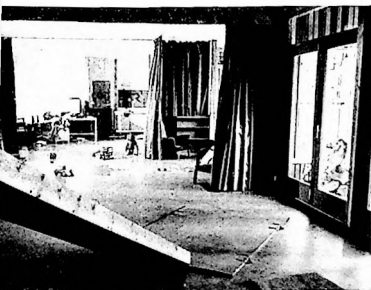


John Drysdale



The Chelsea Adventure Playground for Handicapped Children, designed by Robert Howard, is visited weekly by 350 children from special schools all over the Inner London area. It is used by both the physically and mentally handicapped and there are two full-time play leaders. Top left: overhead track from gate to main building. Far left: slide. Top: lower level of Swedish-type jumping frame with foam cushions, swing, etc. Left: General view of overhead track, climbing and other equipment. Above: main indoor play area with climbing frame and slide, carpentry bench at far end of room and curtained story-telling area

Photographs by Marilyn Stafford



The Chelsea Adventure Playground for Handicapped Children, designed by Robert Howard, is visited weekly by 350 children from special schools all over the Inner London area. It is used by both the physically and mentally handicapped and there are two full-time play leaders. Top left: overhead track from gate to main building. Far left: slide. Top: lower level of Swedish-type jumping frame with foam cushions, swing, etc. Left: General view of

overhead track, climbing and other equipment. Above: main indoor play area with climbing frame and slide. carpentry bench at far end of room and curtained story-telling area

Adventure playgrounds for children, unknown or viewed with suspicion in the fifties, have slowly become an accepted part of community life in the last ten years. Over the same period, there has been an increasing concern for the disabled at all levels and much research is being done into the needs of the handicapped. The 1948 Children's Act and the 1959 Mental Health Act have helped improve the lot of the handicapped child, and responsibility for education of mentally handicapped children has just been transferred from the Department of Health and Social Security to the Department of Education and Science, bringing them into line with the physically handicapped. But it is only quite recently that the idea has developed that handicapped children can benefit just as much from an adventure playground as can an ordinary child.

A few schools and hospitals dealing with handicapped children have set up playgrounds based in principle on the adventure concept. One of the first was at Queen Mary's Hospital, Carshalton, established as an extension to a three-year project in a ward for severely subnormal children based on the Brooklands experiment by Professor J Tizard in the United States. Junior training schools like the one at the Parkwood Centre for Mentally Handicapped at Alfreton, Derbyshire (architects George Grey & Partners) have included an adventure playground at design stage. Others like the recent ones at the Hyleford JTS at Redbridge and the Marlborough Special School at Bexley (architect Robert Howard of Howard & Pank) have been added at a later stage and financed by parents and local associations aided by local authority grants.

At Bexley, the playground was financed by the Dartford and Bexley District Society for Mentally Handicapped Children and is on local authority ground adjacent to the school, opened a year ago. Different levels have been created by extensive earth moving (by the local authority) and trees and shrubs planted. A Swedish redwood playhouse cum climbing frame built on a wooden platform is reached by brick steps. These steps have a specific function: an opportunity for the children to learn to negotiate stairs in a school where there are none. For this reason also there is a handrail on one side and not on the other. The main path from the school crosses a downhill brick-enclosed sand stream via a small hump-back bridge; other equipment includes a tree ladder and various slides. This playground, like that at Redbridge, has only recently been completed and is at present rather bare-looking. As trees develop and the grass is allowed to grow high in places it should become an attractive place. The school caters for 55-60 children up to the age of 16 and has a staff of six. The head, Mrs Taylor, feels the playground should also be used at weekends by neighbouring children.

In contrast to the committee-sponsored architect-designed approach, the warden of Hollivell Lodge, a hostel for mentally subnormal children in Colchester, has over a period of five years created

a play area with the help of a local contractor, the county council, an architect friend, nearby American airmen and voluntary donations. He has built inter-connecting paved cycle areas, a maze made of interwoven fencing panels, grassy hillocks linked by horizontal telegraph poles, a stainless steel embankment slide and tractor tyres made into sandpits, water holders and trampolines; also a cooking area and climbing apparatus in an old apple tree. He was lucky in having a great deal of space, and he has planted an orchard, flowers and shrubs. The school also keeps rabbits, ducks and an aviary.

In her book *Planning for Play*, Lady Allen of Hurtwood (who was until recently chairman of the London Adventure Playground Association) points out that sensory experience is often lacking in handicapped children, partly because of their physical or emotional limitations but also because of lack of opportunities to explore their environment, and that perhaps the greatest value of an adventure playground is in tackling problems of movement and perception. For spastic children it can be particularly beneficial because they may have defects not only of movement and coordination, but also of vision, hearing, speech, intelligence, behaviour and perception. The adventure playground for handicapped children, in Chelsea, which opened in February 1970, differs from the others - and at the same time comes nearer one concept of an adventure playground - in that it is a central meeting place for all types of handicapped and is run by two full-time play leaders. It was designed particularly with brain-damaged children in mind whose lack of sensory awareness often means they are unable to learn through normal experience. The playground is sited in the 2½-acre grounds of the Rectory in Old Church Street - a rare luxury in an expensive residential area - and was designed by Robert Howard, whose Bexley and Redbridge schemes directly resulted from his work here.

Because children come long distances and some are very handicapped there had to be adequate indoor provision made. This building had to be demountable as it may at some time have to be moved. The main building is a Vic Hallam cedar-clad single-story pre-fab (type 6) incorporating a large room with various activity areas such as a carpentry bench, a sunken story-telling area and a slide and climbing platform. Leading off this is a kitchen, small office, store room, toilets and washing facilities including a shower for muddy children, washing machine and tumble dryer. There is also a small circular grain silo with a hemispherical roof, incorporating a water-play pool, which was included particularly for brain-damaged and partially sighted children but has proved something of an expensive white elephant.

Outside, the garden has been landscaped to a variety of levels and materials using existing trees, lawn and shrubs. There is a stream and two pools, a large sand garden and lots of grassy space for football. The specially designed structures include a jumping frame with ropes



*Designed by Lawrence Halprin & Associates,
the San Francisco landscape architects,
the Auditorium Forecourt Fountain at Portland, Oregon,
is the third stage in an amenity
recreation area near the town centre financed
by Portland Development Commission.
More falls than fountain, the concrete massings have
been deliberately built to be used—walked in,
paddled in, even swum in, and have been enthusiastically
taken over by young and old*

and ladders and rubber cushions. An overhead track through the trees runs from a lookout tower to the main building, both fun and useful to transport heavily disabled children. Moveable equipment includes piles of wooden bricks, trucks, trams and bicycles – and there is a trampoline and barbecue.

About 350 children visit the playground each week in morning and afternoon sessions. It is also used during the holidays, but unfortunately not at present at weekends. The total cost was £22 000 and it costs £5000 a year to run. About one third of this comes from the Inner London Education Authority, the rest from local authorities whose schools use the playground, and from voluntary contributions. The ILEA was approached at the outset and agreed to back the project with the proviso that all types of special schools within its area were eligible. Neither the organisers nor the architect think the playground is perfect. Some structures are not standing up well to wear, particularly the overhead track

(which gets a terrific bashing from robust ESN children). It is felt that expensive items – such as the grain silo – could be dispensed with and others incorporated. Some experts believe the playground is trying to cover too wide a field and that each type of handicap needs separate assessment and design, others that handicapped children should be incorporated in neighbourhood adventure playgrounds, encouraging their acceptance by the community. But many practical difficulties arise, like lack of space for specially designed areas, necessity for much more supervision and the possible exclusion of the very severely handicapped.

At Chelsea the children have a social centre where they can make new friends and, away from their everyday surroundings, learn a new kind of independence. The resident play-leaders are very pleased with the progress children have made over a period of regular visits, often using equipment which would not nor-

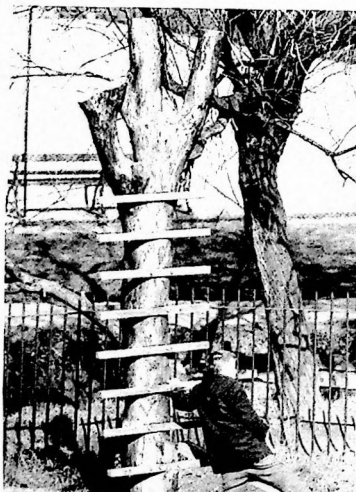
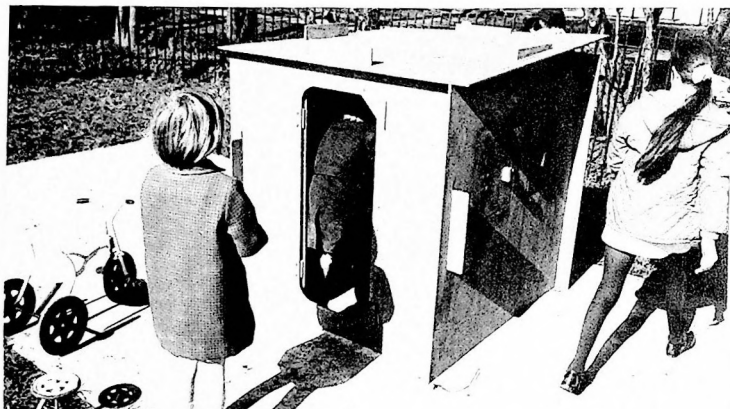
mally be available to them within their own schools and which they were not thought capable of handling.

Criticisms apart, Chelsea has created a great deal of interest here and abroad and has spurred others on, not to imitate but to put forward related ideas. One such scheme is at the committee stage in North-east London incorporating carefully graded areas within the more general playground. Students, many of whom are doing extensive field work in the problems of the handicapped, are also inspired by Chelsea, sometimes with practical results. Robert Howard's own students in Dublin have designed and built an adventure playground for ESN girls. In Essex, the students at Thurrock College of Further Education (where the only full-time course in play leadership leading to a diploma is in operation) have set up an adventure playground at Treetops, an independent day school for ESN children at Grays, and are now working on a similar project for mentally handicapped children



at South Ockenden, where the playground will be staffed by a trained play leader. The national design competition for an outdoor experience play area for the mentally handicapped at the Ravenswood Village is also creating much interest among designers and students and should produce some interesting results.

There is a great deal in the pipeline; what is sad is that so much research, individual effort and complicated committee work has had comparatively little practical results so far. This is in part due to complicated financial problems and the fact that responsibility is shared between an enormous number of societies, associations and bodies, both national and local, mostly financed by voluntary contributions. The situation has become so fragmented that many people working in related fields of research or design are unaware of what others are doing. Some form of pooled information is necessary, and this is already under way.

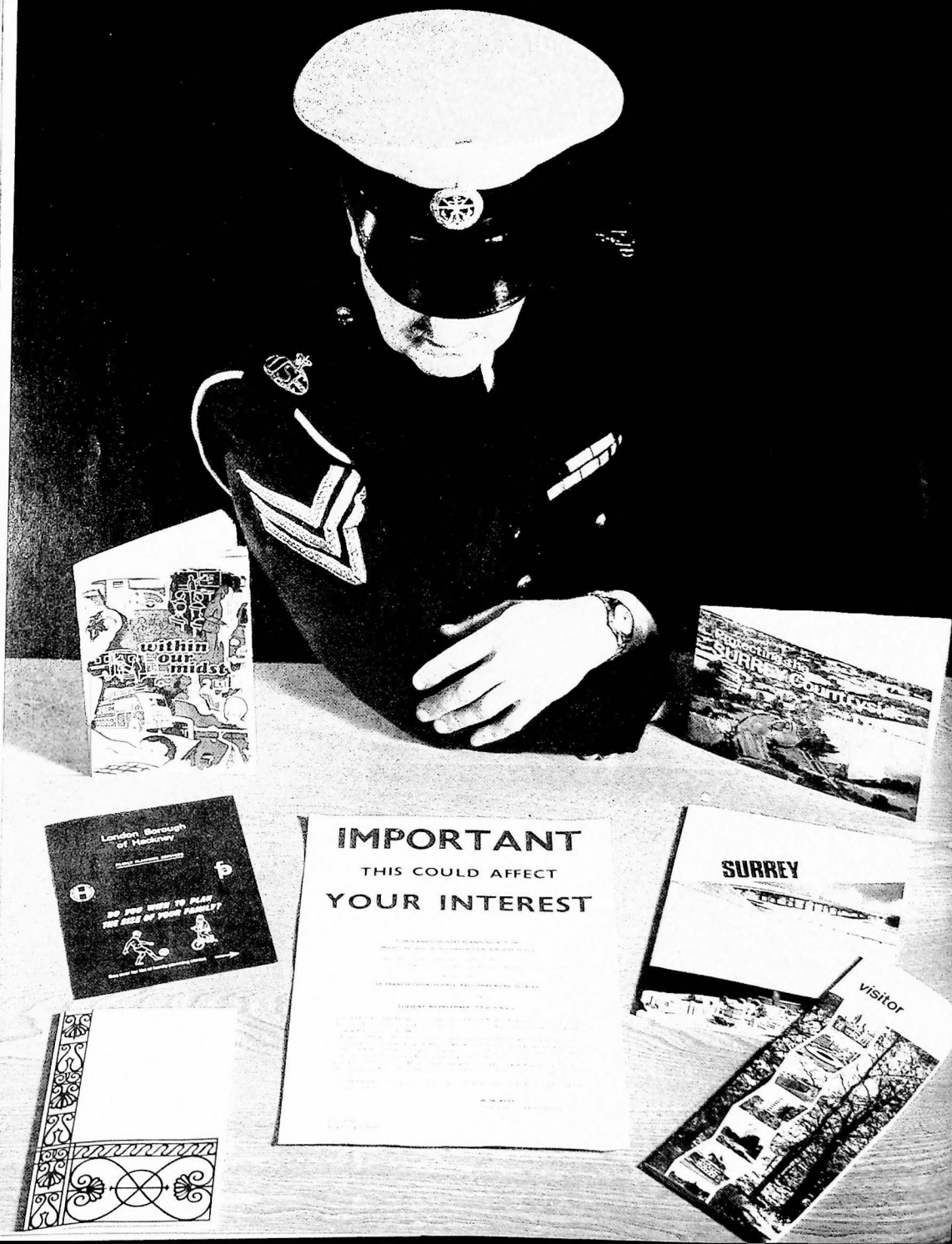


The Marlborough Special School in Marlborough Park Avenue, Baxley, caters for about 60 mentally handicapped children. The newly finished playground, by Robert Howard, was initiated and paid for by the local society for the mentally handicapped with local authority help. It is designed for children attending the school but will be used at weekends and in the holidays by other local children. Far left:

brick-enclosed sand stream and bridge. Left: wooden climbing frame cum play house. Top: downhill view of sand stream bridge and main path from school. Centre above and above: plywood Wendy house. Above left: Swedish redwood playhouse with climbing frame, approached by brick stairs with handrails on one side to encourage children who find stairs difficult to negotiate. Left: tree ladder.

In search of a graphic image

Graphics are the face which a council gives to information, announcements, signs and symbols. David Peschek argues that clarity is as important as beautiful typography



Local government, we are always being told, is big business. Why then does it have such problems over communication? A few years ago the Maud Committee concluded after extensive research and deliberation that local government had failed to communicate itself to the public and had failed to stimulate the community's interest.

Much of the reason for this state of affairs is to be found in the fact that there are at the moment 1200 separate local councils in England and Wales (and that doesn't include parish councils). Only one in ten of these authorities employs a public relations officer, and the number who make any pretence of using the graphic arts as an effective communications tool is fewer still.

If you are in any doubt about this take a look at the rate demand note which comes through your letterbox at this time of year. It is almost certainly an obscure document. It throws a jumbled mass of information and instructions at you. And what is even worse, it is downright dull. That is bad public relations at a time when the local council desperately needs your understanding and support. The blow may be softened in some areas by an attempt to provide a more readable version of what the council actually provides for you. In the case of my own rural district I found that this compounded the irritation. A tedious printed letter addressed "Dear Sir/Madam" informed me that the council chairman sympathised with my drainage problems because he was also lumbered with a cesspool.

Unless you are a council house tenant you will be unlikely to receive any other communication from your council during the year. Even in those areas where the council treats the communications business as it should be treated — as a sustained exercise — you will be fortunate if your council succeeds in creating any sort of image or making any impact.

Curiously enough, the Maud Committee failed even to mention the use of graphics in local government. Nevertheless their use is on the increase, even if it is confined mainly to the Greater London Council area and to a handful of the larger councils, particularly the urban ones. No doubt the professionals are horrified at some of what they see. But it is important to remember that graphics is only one of the tools needed in the communications business. To maintain a meaningful relationship with the public, a local council must know the nature of the audience it is trying to reach; it must have something to say; and it must be aware of the need to use professional expertise to get its message across.

Council documents can be divided into two broad kinds. There are documents which the council is obliged to produce — the rate demand note, the council agenda and committee reports and, of course, the inevitable correspondence. Then there are the optional documents — the civic news sheet or newspaper, the publicity handout or information leaflet, posters and civic guides. Council agendas present a picture of almost unrelieved gloom. County

council documents tend to be much more informative than those of other councils, but even here they are regarded as working documents for internal use: the wider information needs of the public are not allowed to disturb the legal mumbo-jumbo that is so characteristic of them. One chink in this depressing scene is the outstanding example set by Cheshire County Council. Not only are their agenda/reports well designed but they are also written in good, concise English. This has an immediate practical value for journalists and is an ideal communications medium for those members of the general public who make a habit of reading the agendas in public libraries.

Cheshire, it must be admitted, is a large authority with money to spend on such things. But it has spent wisely. It is the only county to have adopted a contemporary logo as its house style, rather than the traditional coat of arms.

Although there are still plenty of examples of lack of thought about the outdated image conveyed by council letterheads, the situation here is much more encouraging. You will still find surprising examples like Westminster City Council, the wealthiest city in the country, who persist with a letterhead more reminiscent of a nineteenth century solicitor's office. But there is a distinct move towards improvement in letter design, and the use of good, functional letterheads is not by any means confined to the larger councils.

The production of news sheets or newspapers is not widely developed in local government because of difficulties over content and distribution. Many councils with public relations officers seem to think it is a necessary part of the publicity business. The best examples are more often those with a specific task to perform — such as telling residents about a redevelopment or improvement scheme. Those which merely try to be the town hall newspaper all too often end up a poor second best to the local newspaper. It is arguable, anyway, that the success of a news sheet lies primarily in the written word. Civic guides, now increasingly used as a means of attracting tourists in places traditionally not associated with the holiday trade, show distinct room for improvement. In general these still sadly lack new ideas in copy and presentation: a survey of this specific field was made by Clive Graham in DESIGN 248/40.

Where design is beginning to make a mark is in the use of symbols as a means of identity for local councils and the services they provide. Corporate identity is, by tradition, conveyed by means of elaborate and colourful coats of arms. Some of these are better than others, and more often than not they are used in a haphazard fashion. In better examples they have been incorporated in a modified form in letterheads, press releases and staff advertisements. Reform of London government in the sixties gave an impetus to the growth of PR work in local government, and out of this grew a welcome interest in modern symbols. Camden, Hackney, Haringey, Harrow, Islington, Lewisham and Tower Hamlets

The Celebrated Historian
A.J.P. TAYLOR
THE SECOND WORLD WAR
HACKNEY TOWN HALL MARE STREET E.8.
ON TUESDAY 9 FEBRUARY 8pm
ADMISSION FREE
 by ticket from libraries and Information Bureau

WHAT IT MEANT: HOW IT WAS FOUGHT.
 Presented by Hackney Library Services



Islington Council

YOUR VIEWS - PLEASE

Your views and comments are being sought by the Council on their proposals to introduce a number of traffic management measures in the Canonbury and Midway area. The idea of the proposals is to discourage through traffic using the residential roads in the area and to reduce traffic conflict at some junctions.

COME to a meeting in the Public Hall, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 on Monday, March 1st 1971 at 7.30 p.m. Hear about the proposals and give your views.

In the meantime, you can see the plans at the information point at the Town Hall during normal office hours. Handbills giving the details are also available.

PLEASE MAKE A POINT OF ATTENDING THE MEETING



Opposite: a typical selection of local authority publications — typical, that is of the small percentage of authorities who actually bother to publish information. The message to be put across isn't always very obvious, and that matters more than

whether or not the graphics are good. Above: three examples of the logo, for which more and more London boroughs are plumping in action. None are good, but the worst is from Haringey, who insist on advertising themselves at vantage points on the borough boundary

HARLOW NEWS

A QUARTERLY NEWSPAPER FOR HARLOW RESIDENTS

AUTUMN 1970

How the Red Devils came back and Paddy thought he was seeing things

So then along came this great big Irish Mick with his eyes popping out of his head and a mouth shaped permanently to the size of a pint of Guinness and bawling about as if the little people had got hold of his tail. So I said "What's the matter Pat, was it the devil himself you saw then?" "The Devil my eye," says he, "now there's been nothing like it since me old granny fell into Paddy O'Callaghan's whiskey still and wouldn't come out for three days."

There's great snakes and talons and red devils falling out of the sky and fierce Red Indians riding motorcycles through walls of burning flame. There's heroes in bathing caps and a wild west spectacular and a dive of death through fire and into a fiery pool. There's soldiers marching and bands playing and great big international wrestlers tearing each other limb from limb.

There's old cars from way back, flowers and dogs of all kinds, exhibitions, fashion shows and music for children.

"Where's all this then Pat?" says I, "it sounds like you just had one too many." "No no," says he, "you don't understand. There's old time music, hill top and champagne, show-jumpers and champion dogs and little rabbits and fish and cage-birds and a fun fair... it's the Town Show, you know, the Harlow Town Show on August Bank Holiday. It's all going to be there for two whole days and I don't think I've seen anything like it before... but I'll tell you afterwards..."

... holdovers... Town Show, Town Park, Saturday, Sunday... holdovers... Great big jumping town show, bank holiday, there's never been anything like it since me old granny.



Photo: John Rafter, Youth Bureau

Tower Hamlets News

The News Journal of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets

THE ISLE OF DOGS AND ITS PROBLEMS

On the Isle of Dogs, Tower Hamlets, there are many problems. The area is a mix of old and new buildings, and the population is growing. There are many problems with the housing, the roads, and the environment. The council is trying to solve these problems, but it is a long and difficult process.



CITY NEWS

A special supplement of the Corporation of Newcastle upon Tyne news sheet, published bi-weekly, attention is drawn to the Newcastle Evening Journal, 22 Oct 1970.

Newcastle is to be a great, something approaching 2000 performers, artists and musicians will be depending on the City in October to provide a host of entertainment for the residents. For the period of the Festival the City may perhaps be appropriately known as...

Festival-on-Tyne



CITY AND COUNTY OF KINGSTON UPON THAMES Civic Review



One method councils are using to improve their service and image is through the monthly or quarterly news sheet. The problem here is to find a style which is not reminiscent of a poor copy of a local newspaper, above, or a mirror image of a company house magazine, left. It's difficult for the sheet to give identity to the council if it lacks identity itself. Letter-heads are an obvious outlet for identity, but here again councils often offer a muddled or ancient front. The most glaring example is Westminster, which belongs to a different age. All other councils shown below have tried to do something, though with very moderate success.

Hastings

COUNTY COUNCIL OF THE ISLE OF WIGHT & PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT 10-14, QUEEN'S WAY, HASTINGS

DATE: 7th August 1970



SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

W. W. Hull, D.L., Clerk of the Council
County Hall, Kingston upon Thames

1st Mr. Bell

2nd Mr. Bell

TELEPHONE: 0181 890 0000



CITY OF WESTMINSTER

A. G. DENTON, C.B.E., M.A., M.P.
TOWN CLERK AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE

YOUR REP.

MY REP.

WESTMINSTER CITY HALL

VICTORIA STREET S.W.1



Borough of Cheltenham

CHICHESTER ROAD, CHICHESTER, SUSSEX BN1 1UG

TOWN HALL, IMPERIAL SQUARE, CHELTENHAM SPA, GLOS. GL50 1GA

JOHN BULLOCK
TOWN CLERK
PUBLICITY & INFORMATION MANAGER
Manager's Office: 02823 21823 (2 lines)
Box Office: 02823 22000

NEWS

from
HAMMERSMITH

RURAL DISTRICT OF MAIDSTONE—GENERAL RATE 1970-71

The Rural District Council have made a GENERAL RATE of 15s. 6d. in the pound for the year ending 31st March, 1971. This includes:— Rural District purposes ... 5s. 8d. County purposes ... 9s. 10d. (see details on p. 101.)

Under the General Rate Act 1967 reductions in poundage will be made as follows:—

Type of Householder	Reduction in rate poundage	Code	Leaving these amounts in the £
Domestic	1s. 8d.	D	11s. 10d.
Mixed	10d.	M	12s. 8d.
All others	—	G	15s. 6d.

Explanation notes will be sent to anyone who wishes to know what determines whether a property is treated as a house or as a mixed householder.

OFFICE ADDRESS	OR OCCUPYER	PARISH
13A LONDON ROAD MAIDSTONE TA 5HT	MR. D. PASCHKE, HILESTONE HOUSE, MAIDSTONE ROAD, STAPLEHURST, MR. TOWNIDGE.	14 15 16

Rate Book No.	Situation of Householder (if different from the address above) and Description	Rateable Value	Amount of Rate
303	HOUSE & GGE.	126	75.12 0

Payment of the rate (and of any arrears of former rates) as shown above IS NOW DUE, but for the convenience of ratepayers the following method of payment will be accepted:—

HALF the rate should be PAID NOW and in any case must be paid by 31st July, 1970. The BALANCE should be PAID IN OCTOBER 1970 and in any case must be paid by 31st January, 1971. NO REMINDER for this PAYMENT WILL BE SENT. Proceedings for recovery will be taken if payment is not made by the latter date in each half-year unless an approved instalment arrangement is in operation. Domestic ratepayers may choose to pay by monthly instalments.

Rate rebates may be obtained by certain domestic ratepayers with low incomes. Details of this scheme and the instalment facilities are available on request.

APRIL, 1970 J. V. DAY, Treasurer.

RECEIVED the sum stated here in printed figures

Payment Slip
General Rate 1970-71
2nd Instalment
MR. D. PASCHKE, HILESTONE HOUSE, MAIDSTONE ROAD, STAPLEHURST, MR. TOWNIDGE.

Cheques, money orders and postal orders should be made payable to MAIDSTONE R.D.C. and crossed.

If you pay by cheque and a receipt is not required, please tear off this slip and send it with your cheque to The Treasurer, Maidstone R.D.C., 13a London Rd., Maidstone.

In all other cases please send or bring the complete account with your remittance.

303 HOUSE & GGE. 126

RURAL DISTRICT OF MAIDSTONE - GENERAL RATE 1970-71

1st Instalment

RECEIVED the sum stated here in printed figures

Payment Slip
General Rate 1970-71
1st Instalment
MR. D. PASCHKE, HILESTONE HOUSE, MAIDSTONE ROAD, STAPLEHURST, MR. TOWNIDGE.

Cheques, money orders and postal orders should be made payable to MAIDSTONE R.D.C. and crossed.

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303 HOUSE & GGE. 126

MAIDSTONE RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL OFFICE,
25 TOWNHALL ROAD,
MAIDSTONE, KENT.
April, 1970

To all Ratepayers of the Maidstone Rural District

Dear Sir/Madam,

Your Rural District Councillors have tried hard during the past year to pursue their main policy of providing a service to the public at a reasonable and equitable cost. With rates rising sharply everywhere around us it would be a miracle to stop and assume that ratepayers would expect a better service in return. Much thought has gone into next year's expenditure and new projects and thus we have had to prune out the luxuries and concentrate on the essentials of modern day life.

FINANCE, RATING AND VALUATION

Almost three-quarters of the amount you are asked to pay as rates in 1970-71 is for the services provided by the County Council—the balance is for the services by the Rural and Parish Councils. Full details of the rate to be levied and reductions in poundage are on the Rating Notice, which is sent to you with this letter. For those domestic ratepayers who prefer to pay by instalment, facilities are available and details may be obtained from Rates Office.

Many domestic ratepayers with limited incomes are receiving two rebates, but possibly none could qualify—details of the scheme can be obtained from the Rates Office.

The Council constantly endeavours to give ratepayers value for money but, like everyone else, we have to face ever-increasing costs, and the least of which arises from interest rates of up to 10% payable on money borrowed for essential capital works.

PUBLIC HEALTH

As in the past, this remains our highest priority and gives us the greatest problems, as we have started a Work Study scheme to try to gain greater efficiency. Provision has been made for all areas to have Paper Sheds collection. The cost of rates amounts to over £8,000 per annum, so please be so concerned as possible. Householders are asked to accept in a few cases, initial but vital, alterations involved in the re-organisation necessary to produce a cleaner and more pleasant service.

Our new depot at Coochwill is in operation and here again, expenditure has been directed to essential and practicalities, from which we trust our area will benefit.

Severage projects to deal with in the year, some of which have been completed and others still to be finished, total the staggering figure of approximately £710,000.

Last year I asked for co-operation of those living in our area to try and stop indiscriminate dumping of rubbish. I would like to thank those who have assisted in this matter and once again ask for your help by reporting immediately any known misuses of this notice. If you intend to dump or have dumped cars have been cleared away by us at your cost.

HOUSING

Due to building expenditure restrictions we have only completed a new Council house in the past year but 22 private houses have had extensive modernisations.

The Linton Road old peoples flatlets with warden accommodation is well on the way and should be open before the end of the year.

GENERALLY

Mr. Letchford, our Clerk for the past 35 years, retired on May 1st and I am glad to welcome Mr. Nicky, our Deputy for the last 17 years, to succeed him. We had our 25th anniversary for the past and I am confident the Council were right in their final selection.

Many I guess ask for local residents' help in assisting where possible our local problems of car parking. Our duty to produce off-street parking is realised, but the cost of this must fall on the ratepayer. May I suggest a little more thought in car parking, as a few more steps by the younger citizens often can be of great benefit to the old and infirm.

A lot has been said relating to Local Government Reform, and I would like to state that the Council categorically opposes the idea of Unitary Authorities taking the place of District Councils if only because representation would be so remote as to leave Local Government completely bureaucratic. The Council's views still remain strongly in favour of a system of two-tier authorities.

In my opinion, Parish Councils only used for information purposes would lead to dictatorship by second class Government officials and I know how popular that would be to the British public!

Three of our Members are spending a considerable amount of time in drawing up plans for the Local Sports Advisory Council.

I would like to finish by thanking all our staff, both inside and out-of-office, who have worked so hard, often in most adverse conditions, throughout the year for the benefit of our ratepayers.

Yours truly,

H. M. ALLFREY,
Chairman of the Council.

With rates demands, most people's principal contact with local government, clarity is all-important and seldom achieved. The

problem is not so much covering letter (even though this is largely a list of excuses) content. Many authorities wouldn't even go as far as Maidstone and issue a

are among the boroughs now using symbols with varying degrees of success and to varying extents in the departments and publicity media of their establishments. Lambeth and Sutton have had a marked success in achieving a sense of corporate identity with good but simple graphics.

Some of the most effective work has been done outside London. Both Liverpool and Sheffield are rapidly gaining reputations as the most publicity conscious cities in Britain. Both have energetic publicity departments engaged in a wide variety of work. Liverpool claim to have been the first council to use a modern symbol; though not in universal use in the corporation, the masthead of Liverpool's distinctive skyline above the words "City of change and challenge" is very familiar to anyone seeking a job there. Sheffield's symbol is now in

regular use not just as the corporation's symbol but as that of a city rapidly exchanging its traditional image for that of a modern, clean, exciting city.

Both cities can point to recent successes with publicity material founded on the use of graphics. Liverpool's glossy magazine, produced for outside consumption, is unique in local government. Sheffield could claim the same for its set of ten letterhead stickers produced for attaching to outgoing mail. Within a few days of being made available the first print of 350 000 had gone, and a third print run is nearly exhausted.

Like other councils, neither Liverpool nor Sheffield employ their own design staff. Liverpool say they could not keep a graphic designer fully employed, and all work (including photographic work) goes to outside firms. Sheffield reckon they could keep a graphic man busy, but

find it more satisfactory to commission freelance artists and designers.

One organisation that can give good advice to councils is the Local Government Information Office. It has given something of a lead with its own publications and has used outside firms and designers with increasing success in its poster campaigns.

"There is a big educational job to be done here," says Laurence Evans, head of the LGIO. "Until councils begin to think of design as part of communications, there will be a psychological blockage about the use of graphics. People like the old-fashioned way of doing things, but the position is slowly improving." Laurence Evans is currently working on a scheme whereby students at the Harrow College of Art can contribute to the improvement of design in local government publicity.

Lunch

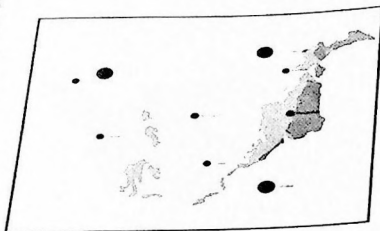
on the occasion of the opening of
the new College Building at the
South Cheshire Central College of
Further Education
by H.M. Queen Elizabeth
the Queen Mother

Crewe, 26th November 1968

Ministry of Transport
North Cheshire Motorway
M56
Hapsford/Wythenshawe



The Unity
of a Country
in Maps



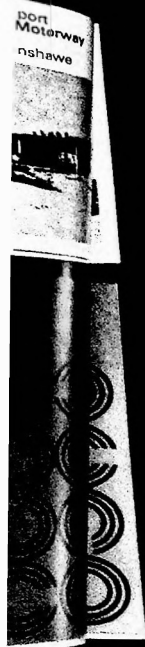
Civic Amenities Act 1967



Replacement
and Modernisation
of existing Houses in
the Countryside

Development
Control Policy
for Villages in Cheshire





Cheshire Planning Officer



Cheshire County Council
Planning Department
100, Victoria Road, Chester, Cheshire, CH1 1JH
Tel: 01244 354111
Fax: 01244 354112



Worsley Country Park

Worsley Country Park
Worsley, Greater Manchester, M28 9PL
Tel: 0161 275 1111
Fax: 0161 275 1112



Worsley Country Park

Worsley Country Park
Worsley, Greater Manchester, M28 9PL
Tel: 0161 275 1111
Fax: 0161 275 1112

With the compliments of The 14th Ranger



Planning Officer: Urban District Council
Town and Country Planning
Acts, 1962 to 1968

1. The Town and Country Planning Act, 1962, is the principal Act of Parliament which governs the planning of land use in Great Britain. It provides the framework for the system of planning which is now in operation. The Act is divided into three main parts: Part I, which deals with the general principles of planning; Part II, which deals with the control of development; and Part III, which deals with the control of land use.

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Cheshire County Council
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Cheshire County Council
Ministerial Officer

Cheshire County Council
Ministerial Officer
100, Victoria Road, Chester, Cheshire, CH1 1JH
Tel: 01244 354111
Fax: 01244 354112



**Cheshire County Council
Social Services
Department**

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Cheshire is the only county council so far which uses a logo (designed by Derek Birdsall) instead of the traditional coat of arms. But, even so, the coat of arms is still used on letterheads and for formal occasions. Cheshire is hoping to have the best of both worlds, trying - in the words of the information officer - "to portray a

progressive modern authority and... the civic dignity of a county council". While this obviously causes some dilution it also means that the house style is not rigidly applied, but allowed to develop in appropriate areas. Examples on this spread are the work of two graphic designers, employed by the county council - David Sims

and Tony Meyers. Their principal object is to improve the standard of publications coming from county hall. Cheshire, of course, has the advantage of being a comparatively rich authority



4 Work Areas Flow to Greater Cheshire

Greater Cheshire
Cheshire
Greater Manchester
Greater London
Greater Birmingham
Greater Liverpool
Greater Manchester
Greater London
Greater Birmingham
Greater Liverpool

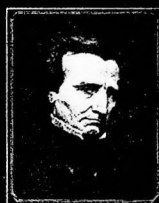
Children's Book Festival 1969

Lambeth Public Libraries



Lambeth Public Libraries

Hector Berlioz 1803 to 1869



Bertrand Russell 1872 to 1970

Philosopher Humanist and Mathematician

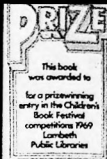
A selected list of his works

Lambeth Public Libraries



was awarded
the Centennial Merit
for
the
Mayor of Lambeth
Chairman of Lambeth

Lambeth Arts and
Recreations Association



READING LIST

1. The Children's Book Festival 1969
2. The Children's Book Festival 1969
3. The Children's Book Festival 1969
4. The Children's Book Festival 1969
5. The Children's Book Festival 1969
6. The Children's Book Festival 1969
7. The Children's Book Festival 1969
8. The Children's Book Festival 1969
9. The Children's Book Festival 1969
10. The Children's Book Festival 1969

LAMBETH PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Lambeth Arts and
Recreations Association

Winter Concerts 1970/71

Nettlefold Hall,
West Norwood Library,
Norwood High Street,
SE27

Each concert commences
at 7.45 pm (Doors open
at 7.15 pm)

Friday, October 23
Isobel Baillie
Friday, November 6
**Young Musicians
Concert**
Friday, December 4
**Berlin Philharmonic
Soloists**
Friday, January 15
**Amadeus String
Quartet**

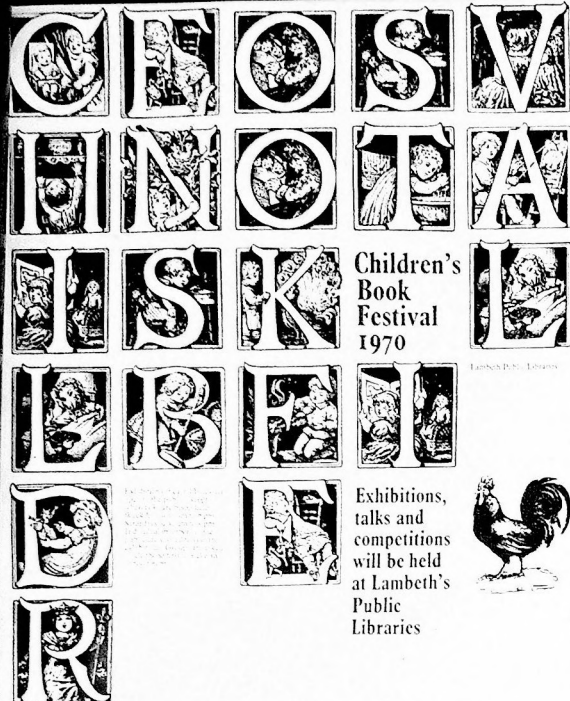
Friday, January 22
John Shirley-Quirk
Friday, February 19
Annie Fischer
Friday, March 5
John Williams
Friday, March 12
John Ogdon

For full details of the programme and ticket prices, please contact the Association at 100, Norwood High Street, SE27 8JL.

Of all London boroughs which since the reshuffle and amalgamation under the GLC in 1965 have shown a greater awareness of their public image by employing professionals to rework logos and other graphics, Lambeth is outstanding. And the modelling at Lambeth does not stop at playing around with a logo. The main outlet to the public is from leaflets and posters, supplied by Lambeth public libraries and designed by Adrian Hodgkins. These show how much scope a designer is given in the wide range of interrelated activities—and, in fact,

the amazingly diverse number of entertainments offered by an imaginative council





Children's
Book
Festival
1970

Lambeth Public Libraries

Exhibitions,
talks and
competitions
will be held
at Lambeth's
Public
Libraries



LAMBETH

Lambeth
Information
Network



Lambeth
Statistical
Boroughs
Association

Lambeth
Statistical
Boroughs
Association



LAMBETH

Partnership for Development

*Lambeth letterheads,
though all designed to a
common high standard,
are the product of both
Adrian Hodgkins, above,
and John Allison, of the
borough architects'
design studio, top and
left*

CBF Saturday 9th May to Saturday 23rd May



Loughborough Park

Lambeth Housing

Your New Home



LAMBETH

191 new homes

Blenheim Gardens Phase 2

*Three examples of
Lambeth's logo in use.
Designed by Herbert
Spencer, it is deceptively
simple, managing
through subtle changes
of scale to fit most
situations*

Best buys?

With an annual revenue expenditure on goods of around £1000 millions at their disposal, Britain's local authorities have an immense potential influence over the design and quality of a wide range of furniture, fittings, equipment, machinery and consumer durables. But the buying activities of town and county halls – split among hundreds of authorities and thousands of departments – are so fragmented, disorganised and inefficient that, except in one specific market, the influence can scarcely be felt. In recent years, however, both central government and a number of more enlightened councils have become increasingly aware of the scope for economies in spending and improvement in the quality of goods purchased. The changes which have been taking place in administrative organisation and purchasing practice amount to a revolution, of which only the first wave is upon us.

The sharpest impact on manufacturing has been in the field of school furniture and the clearest indicators of the changes which are taking place are found in the small number of authorities which already have well established, powerful, centralised supplies departments.

Much of the driving force for change has been supplied by the present and previous governments. The impetus was sustained when the Secretary for the Environment, Peter Walker, cut the level of the local authorities' rate support grant for the coming two years and told the councils that one of the ways in which they could economise was in buying.

In reviewing the forces at work, a convenient starting point is the May 1967 White Paper on Public Purchasing and Industrial Efficiency which outlined ways in which the government, as a major purchaser, was able to influence industry, and stressed the Government's wish to use the purchasing power of the whole of the public sector to promote industrial efficiency and help exports. The then Ministry of Housing and Local Government followed up the White Paper with an invitation to the local authority associations and the GLC to join with central government in setting up a review body.

Legislation streamlined

Reporting in 1969, the Joint Review Body recommended legislation to help bulk buying and also the setting up of a national organisation to coordinate local authority buying and promote efficiency. These recommendations found expression in the Local Authorities (Goods and Services) Act 1970 which enables a council to buy on behalf of other local authorities and public bodies, and in the Joint Advisory Committee on Local Authority Purchasing (JACLAP). The purchasing experience available in local government, the Review Body reported, "varied considerably from authority to authority". Purchasing activity was "very widely dispersed and uncoordinated". Some councils had separate supplies departments buying for all user departments, but many smaller authorities had no centralised arrangements. In between existed a variety of so called central

purchasing: some authorities excluded certain commodities from the purchasing department's brief; others left the main user to buy on behalf of all departments. There was very little co-operation between councils, mainly because there was no general power for one council to buy on behalf of others.

The small amount of expertise available to local government is confirmed by the Institute of Purchase and Supply, whose membership of nearly 11 000 includes only 550 in local government. The lack of coordination within authorities – never mind coordinating between authorities – was shown in a Local Government Operational Research Unit survey of central purchasing, which reported that one authority was buying eight different kinds of typists' chair at discounts of between 7½ per cent and 25 per cent. Another was buying six types of toilet roll ranging from ten per cent to 50 per cent discount. Elsewhere, different departments of the same authority were buying the identical item at widely ranging prices.

Few records, little control

The LGORU sent a questionnaire to local authorities and found that some were unable to quote their annual usage of some items because they kept no records while others showed by their replies that they exercised little control over buying activities. "Schools go to local shops to buy what they can" was one reply. The Unit estimated that, with central purchasing, larger authorities could expect to save about £64 000 a year for every 100 000 population.

Bad local authority practice is all the more glaring in the light of the handful of large authorities which have highly organised machinery for designing, specifying and buying goods. These authorities, led by the Greater London Council and the County Councils of Kent, Essex and the West Riding of Yorkshire, are a guide to the changes which are slowly taking place, in which they themselves are likely to be affected by the move towards even larger groupings of authorities for buying purposes.

The aim of the reform movement is a clutch of large regional purchasing organisations, staffed by experts and disposing of sufficient resources to reap the benefits of standardisation and bulk buying. The long-established GLC Supplies Department, with an annual turnover of nearly £40 millions on non-capital purchases and about 30 members of the Institute of Purchase and Supply on its staff, buys for the GLC itself, the Inner London Education Authority, and to a varying degree for some of the Outer London boroughs. It is coordinating its buying activities with those of the London Transport Executive, and, within the GLC, assuming responsibility for services like cleaning, messengers, and postal distribution.

Similarly, the West Riding, with a turnover of £11 millions a year, buys for itself and for nine county boroughs, 60 district councils, and a number of organisations like independent schools and river authorities.

Both the West Riding and the GLC have their own range of school furniture manufactured to their own specifications. This is an activity in which they are paralleled by consortia of local authorities like the Nottinghamshire based CLASP (consortium of local authorities for special projects) and the Counties Furniture Group, based on Essex and Shropshire and covering 28 authorities. In this specialised field of school furniture there has been a complete revolution in the last decade, with the main impact falling in the last four years and the full potential yet to be realised.

The changes stem from the new educational philosophy which demands more informality and flexibility in teaching areas, involving both buildings and furniture. The changes in furniture design, and with them, in the pattern of manufacture and supply, has been chiefly inspired, it is generally acknowledged, by David Medd, of the DES Architecture and Building Branch.

With Bob Sutton, who joined CLASP from private practice with one of the country's leading architectural partnerships, he has designed a range of school furniture now manufactured by Pel Ltd, of Warley, and sold under the trade name Forme to CLASP members and other local education authorities throughout the country. Forme furniture was shown in the British pavilion at Osaka and is in use in the United Nations International School in New York. Its excellence has given Britain an acknowledged lead in the field of school furniture. The range of 150 items is currently being extended to meet secondary and higher education needs.

Originally, the CLASP designs were made by a number of firms coordinated by the Ministry of Public Building and Works and supplied through a central depot to education authorities, a system which quickly became inadequate both to meet the demand and to cope with continuing design development. The Ministry asked selected firms to put forward proposals for manufacturing and supplying the range. Pel were selected and took over responsibility in April 1969, adding their own Multi-forme range of steel and polypropylene chairs to the CLASP designs (called Omni-forme).

Integration an ideal

The furniture, in colour-coded age ranges, is tough, safe and flexible in use. Even the smallest chairs are designed to carry a teacher's weight and bulk. Designing for the more sophisticated and varied needs of secondary schools is proceeding "with due care", according to CLASP's development group leader, Glyn Phillips. "Ideally," he says, "we will end up with an integrated range. But it will take some years yet and it will never be quite complete because there will always be some new need to cater for."

Activities by CLASP and the other consortia have drastically reduced the number of firms making school furniture, to the extent that there are fears that an essential variety of choice may be lost. But it does mean that the manufacturers

Large authorities, who buy on a massive scale, can directly influence product design. John Ardill finds significant organisation only in education

can offer a total range, which was scarcely possible when they were more numerous and the demand was so fragmented. The authorities can buy more cheaply and more exactly meet their requirements. Peter Mullery, a designer for the Counties Furniture Group, suggests that school furnishing used to be "a somewhat haphazard affair, full of compromises and second best selections." Now, perhaps 80 per cent or more of school furniture is bought through the consortia or the centralised supply departments from the ranges purpose-designed by the leading authorities themselves.

Buildings indivisible with furniture

Unlike CLASP, CFG buys from a number of manufacturers with which it places development contracts so that the firm is involved at an early stage in the evolution of the design. The West Riding also buys from several firms, and has used the services of a local company to build prototypes for its design team. CFG designers employed by Shropshire and Essex County Councils work with teachers, education officers, architects and manufacturers in developing designs. Their philosophy is that school buildings and school furniture are indivisible and that good design springs from a combination of technology and aesthetics. The quantities needed by the large number of authorities in the group have made it possible to make more use of plastics and to develop specialist items like furniture for science laboratories and common rooms.

The GLC has already supplied a Mark II version of its primary school range to some schools. The range is designed by the ILEA equipment centre working with the GLC architects department and is manufactured by a number of firms. A GLC range of polypropylene chairs in five sizes and a variety of types is being sold publicly: orders in the first eight months came to 64 000 from the GLC itself (including the ILEA, MoPBW, and Outer London borough requirements) and 22 000 supplied direct by the contractor to other councils and the home trade. The GLC also has standard ranges of general office furniture, and its architects department is currently designing furniture for a new office block.

In the West Riding schools are supplied with a fully integrated range picked from the designs of the consortia and supplemented by the authority's own design department, which was set up after the collapse of the original MoPBW arrangement for supplying CLASP furniture. It also furnishes children's and welfare homes, and is developing a range of library furniture. The main design objective, according to the County's chief officer for supplies, L H Taylor, is to achieve the maximum flexibility of use so as to get maximum working space within the Ministry's building limits. Educational requirements come before aesthetics. The designers are able to respond readily to the ideas of teachers and education advisers but at the same time they have a strong commercial orientation. Furniture design, Mr Taylor believes, is the

function not of architects but of trained designers who can turn other people's ideas into actuality and temper aesthetic principles with a knowledge of the techniques and the practical difficulties of mass production, and can work with the manufacturers in the evolution of a design and the modification of the product.

As with designers, so with the department's professional buyers. They are men who bring commercial practice into play, who can determine the needs of the user and know where to go looking for his requirements. In many authorities, buying is still done by the officer whose main concern is with using the item – fire officers, highways engineers, public health inspectors – whose lack of expertise in buying makes them easy victim to the narrowing confines of the catalogue and the sharp professionalism of the salesman. To Mr Taylor's mind, the main achievement of the large professional supplies organisation in local government is to inject a commercial influence into the process of purchase and supply. "Within the restraints of public accountability – which means more paperwork – we run our organisation on commercial lines."

But if the examples of the school furnishing consortia and of the large supplies organisations point to the future pattern of local government buying, they do so from a position well in advance of the rest of the field. There are, in the view of one expert, only four major supplies organisations, and perhaps eight or nine in the second league, and they cover only a small portion of the local government scene.

Influence, but no coordination

Buying of other items for which local authorities are the principal, if not the only, customer, is nowhere near so well regimented. This is not to say that local authorities do not exert a decisive influence on, for instance, the design of ambulances, fire engines or refuse collection vehicles which may in some instances spread further afield. The GLC was making its own ambulance bodies in glass-fibre – because it is easy to repair and ambulances are prone to minor accidents – long before commercial manufacturers would touch the stuff. It has now handed over to commerce. Its motor transport division is responsible for the design and specification of all special purpose vehicles, including the production of prototypes if necessary. Recent projects include a dental clinic trailer, a mobile unit for noise level recording, a mobile showroom for one of its own supplies depots, and a special temperature controlled vehicle for carrying hot-house plants.

But in many other areas the purchase of vehicles is left to the chief officer concerned and although he may have a good and proper sense of what he wants, the resulting variety of requirements demanded in small numbers is not conducive to efficiency in purchasing, manufacture or design.

The experience of the Bridlington Chief Public Health Inspector and Director of Cleansing, W E Featherstone, illuminates the

condition of a market where the demand is poorly thought out and badly organised. Annoyed at the way the local seagulls dragged fish and chip papers out of his litter bins and scattered them around the streets and beaches, he searched the market for a more effective bin, to no avail. Courting necessity and cajoling a reluctant council, he designed his own range of large capacity, pedestal mounted bins. Bridlington has had them in use for two years with total success. The bins are made and sold under licence by Wybone Industrial Sales Ltd, of Barnsley, but they are not moving as fast as might be expected. Despite its good functional qualities and pleasing appearance, the bin has been rejected for Design Index. Mr Featherstone says: "It makes me angry because of some of the trash on the index, all open tops and teak sides with no more capacity than a cornflakes box. They are inadequate, everything gets wet and they are an open invitation to the seagulls."

Mr Featherstone had also found it impossible to get a purpose-designed vehicle for collecting waste paper because, without a coordinated demand, manufacturers are not interested in spending money on development.

Against purchasing empires

Coordination and standardisation are among the main aims of the movement to reform and improve local authority buying. But the professional buyers leading the movement are alert to the dangers involved in a too ruthless search for efficiency: the creation of purchasing empires leading to a monopoly situation, the sacrifice of local autonomy, the loss of variety which could lead to a deadening sameness in schools and streets, offices and halls.

It is perhaps for fear of centralised domination that the local authorities, in setting up JACCLAP, ignored the Joint Review Bodies advice that the advisory organisation should have a highly qualified expert secretariat. Instead, JACCLAP, like similar joint committees, relies on the secretarial services of one of the associations, the Association of Municipal Corporations, and the advice of technical panels of officers from member authorities.

Lack of full time professional advice may hamper the progress JACCLAP is able to make. Nevertheless, leaders in the field detect a generally improved attitude towards buying and are confident that with continuing encouragement from the Government and the stimulus of local authority reorganisation, a pattern of large regional buying authorities will inevitably emerge. When this happens it will be a market force to be reckoned with.

Published sources

Report of the Joint Review Body on Local Authority Purchasing, HMSO
Does Central Purchasing Pay? Local Government Operational Research Unit/Royal Institute of Public Administration
Annual Report 1969-70, GLC Supplies Department, School Furniture, Education and Training, March 1971



THE LA IN CONTEXT—1

MUTUAL ENTERPRISE AT AYLESBURY

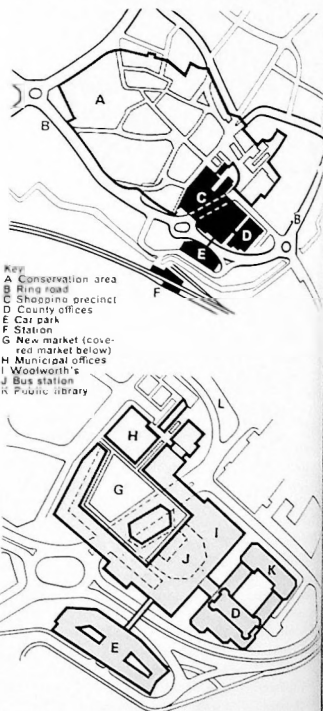
Local authority and developer joined forces at Aylesbury to put together a £3 millions shopping precinct, opened three years ago.

It's a startling commercial success, and the old town centre has benefited



Aylesbury is typical of many medium sized towns which stand to gain and lose by central area redevelopment and present an intriguing planning predicament. The town centre, while of historic value, is not unique. Development in urban conservation areas like Aylesbury can be performed furtively behind historic facades; this has happened at Newbury and there are similar plans for Stratford. Another way is to build a new shopping centre beyond the old high street and market place, which could leave the ancient core doomed to an unpeopled decay. Yet this was the solution adopted for Aylesbury and, two years after its completion, it is becoming possible to see why it has been successful.

Aylesbury is bounded to the south by the Chilterns, to the west by the river Thames. As a GLC overspill town its population has risen briskly from 24 000 in 1950 to its present level of almost 40 000 and is expected to reach 60 000 by 1980. Many of the more recent inhabitants work in London. Marylebone is only an hour down the line, and four or five commuter laden trains leave Aylesbury each morning. But the bulk of the population have jobs in the area, if not within the town itself. Industry, most of it light to middleweight in character and almost all of it clean, has grown spectacularly in the last ten years, complementing the traditional Aylesbury activities of printing and agriculture.





In two years' time the town centre will be enclosed by an inner ring road, of which all but the northern arms are now complete. A conservation area embracing well over half the town centre was fixed in 1969. This runs from the delightfully classical County Hall (Thomas Harris 1740) and the less delightfully neo-Georgian County Offices (C Riley 1929-39) uphill through the market place to the tower and spire of St Mary's Church. Many of the facades are Georgian, though the structure behind them is often much older. In places the buildings form elegant groups – the northern corner of Market Square and the residential terrace fronting St Mary's churchyard are two with particular character – but the charm of the old town lies more in its narrow, quiet streets and interlocking squares than in individual architectural distinction.

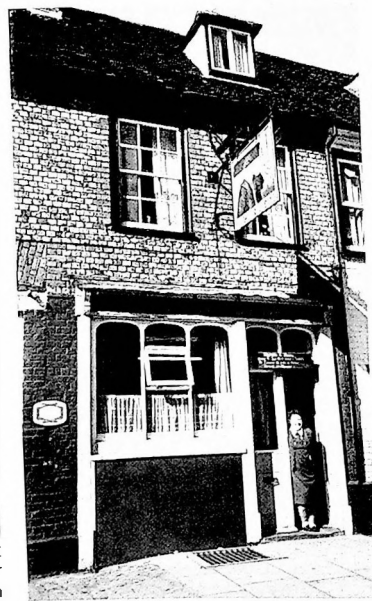
Aylesbury's central area redevelopment – a mammoth £3 millions shopping centre and bus station linked to a new county office block, registrar's office and public library – lies between the southern boundary of the conservation area and the ring road. As an example of a local authority working smoothly in harness with a developer, the shopping precinct is a model of its kind. Like all redevelopment exercises of its type it took a long time to mature, so that although the precinct started to do business in 1969, the preliminary nego-

tiations began a full decade before.

A number of factors made the choice of site inevitable. First, its position hard against the ring road, allowing it to be penetrated by buses, service vehicles and cars. Second, the derelict condition of most existing buildings. Third, the borough council's decision to shift the market out of the traffic-insulated market square into the nearest convenient trading position. And, fourth, the council's determination to create a physical link between the shopping precinct and the new council offices and library.

Another crucial factor was the lie of the land. The site slopes downhill fairly sharply from the north-western corner, which has allowed the all-important bus station and servicing roads to be slotted in beneath the shopping deck. Car parking for shoppers and council workers alike is stacked onto a narrow strip of land between the station and the ring road.

This, in outline, was the planning thesis presented at the public inquiry into the comprehensive development area in 1962. "The Ministry returned our proposals without so much as a dot or a comma added," says Fred Pooley, Bucks County Architect and Planning Officer. He recalls, though, some of the vehement objections from the displaced traders (all of whom were offered 21 year leases in the new scheme) and derives wry amusement over the way in which the

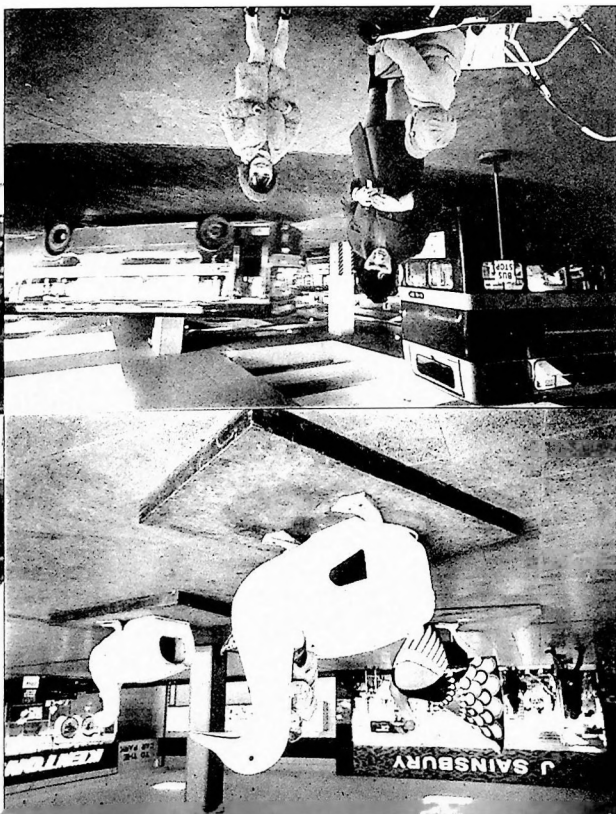


Aylesbury's conservation area, containing monuments like St Mary's Church, top left, the old County Hall above right and pleasant new precinct spaces like Temple Square, top right, full of amenable places to pass the time of day over a drink, above, wraps round two sides of the new precinct

Market Square some older traders
Aylesbury but the gaps they left in the
market community are already being

These factors helped pull in some of the big multiple traders. Woolworths were enticed away from

Bucks Herald, who were also displaced, handled the public inquiry (POOLEY THE PLANNER GRILLED ran one head-





Freshly planted trees have replaced stalls in the old Market Square. The view is different too, with the huge block of Woolworths a grating contrast to the Georgian pub on the corner. At the heart of the precinct the bus station, far left, is conveniently sited beneath the shopping deck and next door to the covered market, above. Aylesbury's symbolic ducks stand guard at the point where the big multiples give way to the smaller trading units. Sunken market place, left and overleaf, does brisk trade on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Raised restaurant provides grandstand view

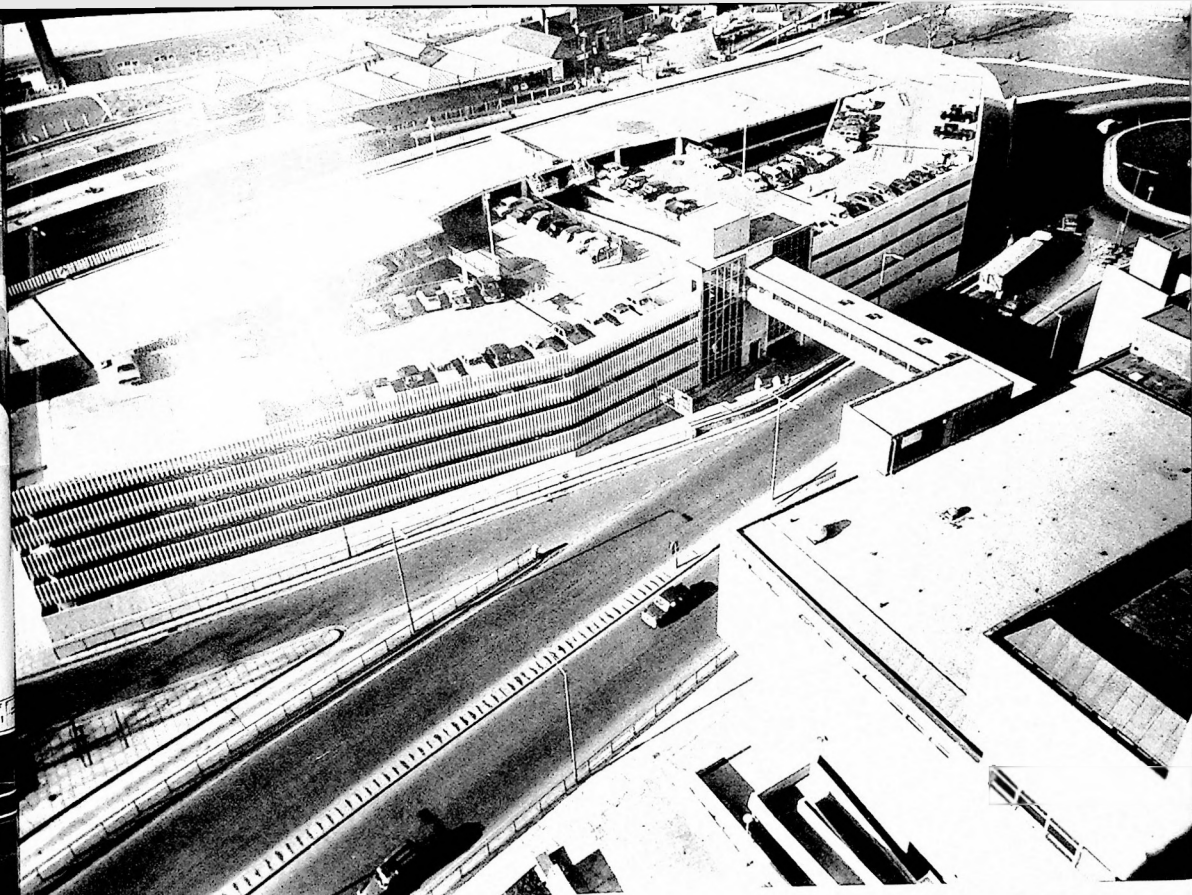
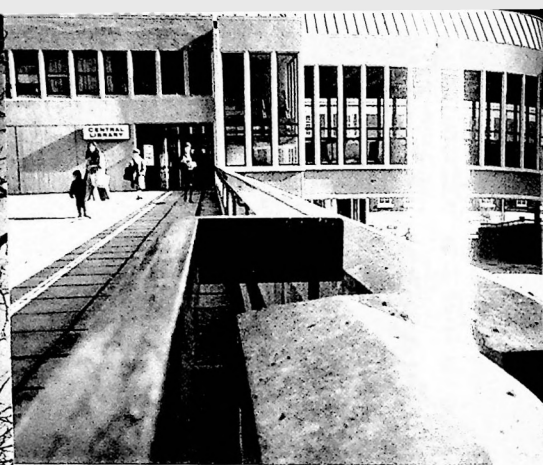
store and report healthy sales. They say they could extend further within their existing bounds by displacing out-moded selling points.

Although the High Street traders' association did not organise any resistance to the planning proposals they realised at an early stage that the planners meant to direct shoppers to the new precinct. They countered with an advertising campaign emphasising the friendly service and availability of wide ranges of smaller slow moving items classed out of precinct shops by the higher rents demanding quick turnover and more efficient use of storage space.

One regrettable effect of the development may yet prove to be its influence on the village shops as they are gradually reduced to supplying only the small items forgotten in the once or twice weekly trip to Aylesbury. Villagers and farmers alike say prices are rising sharply at home and that they can easily recoup their 20-30p bus fares from wise buys in the town. Some village shops may survive the ordeal by converting into mini-supermarkets (and thereby creating planning nightmares of another sort) but a seriously high proportion will face closure in the next few years.

Any doubts one may have about the Aylesbury scheme are architectural. The design, by Bernard Engle and Partners, knits in well with the cavernous bus station and makes a pleasant enough link with the market square. Smaller elements - the single storey shops, the sunken market piazza, even the Brutalist street furniture - have all been pleasantly handled. But the materials are ill chosen and used in a highly undisci-





Aylesbury contains few buildings of historic significance, but its distinctive townscape of small scale, friendly buildings – such as the North side of Market Square, above left, and Temple Street, above – is well worth preserving. Traditional butcher's shop, left, is holding its own outside the

plined fashion; while the larger elements, in particular the great concrete cube of Woolworths, make a disastrous impression when seen from the market square.

Bernard Engle's rugged horizontal forms with their brown coarse aggregate cladding panels and Fred Pooley's equally rugged vertical office tower with its grey cladding make an ill-assorted pair. The Pooley scheme – a library and 12 storey office tower planted on a raised courtyard – must be one of the best known local authority buildings in the country. Not every one in Aylesbury is overfond of Fred's Fort (as Ian Nairn once described the tower) but Pooley reckons that public opinion is swinging his way. From his office on the tenth floor he sees a prosperous future for the town, particularly since the decision was made not to site the controversial third London airport at nearby Cublington.

The main expansion thrust will be into the Vale of Aylesbury to the north. But Pooley hopes that most of the Vale will be declared an Area of Outstanding Beauty, to drive a green wedge between Aylesbury and Milton Keynes. If that happens the town will be enclosed on all sides by a green belt, and development will hopefully be held in check. A population of 60 000, making huge demands for leisure and industrial space (let alone housing) is about the maximum that Aylesbury can afford if it is to retain its present scale.



County Offices and library are plugged in to the southern end of the precinct, opposite top. All three are linked, above and below ground level, to a multi-storey car park at the other side of the ring road, above. Municipal offices block, left, overlooks the precinct

These old warehouses, modelled on similar buildings in the Hansatic ports, are now derelict. Right, the Market Place has lost through traffic, but this ugly street barrier has been 'temporary' for three years. Below, on Saturdays, the Market Place is full of life but usually it is full of cars.



Wisbech dices with death

Wisbech, once a prosperous market town and port, has a legacy of interesting buildings but not much stimulus to preserve them. Paul Bural reports



The attractions of York, Oxford or Bath are obvious and the problems of preserving them have been well studied. But the character of Britain depends equally on the small historic towns scattered between the tourist centres, and these face increasing difficulties in retaining their character — where it has not already been lost. Their pleasing streets grew up from agricultural and trading wealth; their present attractions often stem from being left out of the industrial revolution; their present problems include a lack of resources as their reason for existence fades into history.

Wisbech in Cambridgeshire is one such town. Listed as one of England's 51 "gem" towns by the Council of British Archaeology, the town is famous for the Brinks, an almost unbroken street of Georgian buildings either side of the River Nene. The town also boasts two market places and the Crescent, an excellent Georgian circus built around the site of the old castle.

But anyone driving through on the main A47 road will begin to glimpse the problems. The approach is good, the excellence of the Brinks being only slightly marred by the failure to hide a number of ugly single storey buildings revealed some years ago by the demolition of the end Georgian house. It would take a leisurely eye to spot the derelict lamp post rusting into the river or the sad state of the empty Olde Whyte Harte Hotel. Past the old bridge and things get worse. On one side, im-



posing Hanseatic warehouses have long been derelict. On the other, shop after shop is empty. Further on, the elegant modern bridge (opened earlier this year by a fire engine on its way to a false alarm breaking the ribbon before the local MP could wield his scissors) heightens the absurdity of the poor fifties Georgian police station. A final horror is the eighteenth century windmill, topped not with sails but ridiculous postwar concrete castellations.

Wisbech's problem is economic. Its wealth is based on the rich fen farmland of which the town is the capital: the local agricultural and horticultural industries flourish, but mechanisation has reduced their labour forces by something like 1000 jobs in ten years. Industry, despite efforts by the borough council, has been slow to move in. The unemployment rate is now seven per cent, nearly three times the East Anglian average. Already Wisbech has lost both of its railway stations, and is now to be

missed out by the Midlands-East Anglian motorway. The town threatens to become a backwater, with the 50 000 people whom it traditionally serves being increasingly pulled towards the growing towns of King's Lynn and Peterborough. Of course, if new industry, shops and people had been attracted, many more of the town's old buildings and pleasant character might have been lost during redevelopment. But now the town badly needs outside resources.

It is this context which explains the air of despair surrounding the story of the Georgian granary on North Brink. Occupying a key position and providing an ideal foil for the elegance of the Georgian houses immediately upstream, the granary is in excellent condition. But within a few months of the owner putting it on the market last year the planning authority, the borough council and the Wisbech Society had all "reluctantly" agreed not to object to the demolition of this Grade 2 building, on condition that it was replaced with a pseudo-Georgian architect-designed office block. Yet the director of the Historic Buildings Bureau was convinced that a use could be found for the granary fairly easily. He was right: the granary and the adjacent house were bought, just in time, by a book dealer who intends to use them as they are.

Equally hopeless was the local response to the problem of Mounpesson House, another Grade 2 Georgian building but unfit for habitation and situated in a clearance area. This time the applica-

tion to demolish came from the borough council, with the planning authority and the Wisbech Society again raising no objection. After a public inquiry last year permission to demolish was refused by the Department of the Environment, the Inspector commenting that Mounpesson House "could be made a focal point in the new development and could add considerably to the character of the environment. . . there has been no detailed consideration of the costs involved in making good the defects".

Should buildings which have survived for 250 years be thrown away with so little investigation of the alternatives? Of course, there are plenty of examples of listed buildings which have been left to rot because more people are prepared to protest about demolition than face the cost of living or working in a historic house. Nevertheless, Wisbech seems to be ready to write off its heritage without a fight. An equal lack of care is evident elsewhere. An ugly traffic barrier in the Market Place has been "temporary" for three years. The uniform quality of the Crescent is spoiled by pastiche Georgian rebuilding, complete with metal window frames. Many of the "No waiting" signs on the Brinks are bent. The tower of the twelfth-century church is topped by a clumsy cross embedded with naked light bulbs. A "Brighter Wisbech" painting scheme has faded into oblivion.

Recent building in Wisbech has added little of which to be proud. "The Trustee Savings Bank in the Old Market is a good example of a modern travesty of Georgian architecture," says a young local architect, Tim Forecast. "The Georgians did not copy their predecessors, so why should we try to build shams of Georgian domestic architecture for twentieth-century commercial uses? People here seem to be afraid of what modern architects are doing."

But Wisbech has plenty of character left. It still boasts more than 200 buildings of Grade 2 standard or above, with a further 100 on the Grade 3 list. What is more, the town is now beginning to take advantage of recent legislation to protect the best buildings and improve the central area. Last month the whole of the central core was declared a conservation area, and Cambridgeshire County Council will now undertake a detailed survey to devise proposals "to ensure that the historic buildings survive in appropriate uses, and in their essential authentic character. . . where the historic atmosphere and charm of the borough has been subject to attrition, new development should take place in a sympathetic way."

Again last month the county and borough councils launched a scheme for helping the owners of listed buildings in the Crescent and the Brinks by making available grants to cover up to half the cost of structural improvements. Each council is providing £1500 a year (equivalent to $\frac{1}{3}$ of a new penny rate), with the DoE providing a further £3000. These special grants, combined with the standard improvement grants, should do much to enable historic buildings to be kept in use. But there is also a case for help to be given with running expenses

too. The cost of insurance and maintenance on a historic building is often considerably higher than for its modern equivalent. It would therefore seem fair for these special costs to be partially covered by grant, possibly on the same 50/50 basis as for other grants.

Wisbech is also coming to grips with the traffic problem. The dual carriage-way inner relief road, while forming a block between the commercial centre and much of the residential area (an effect worsened by clumsy barriers on both sides and down the middle), has enabled through traffic to be eliminated from Market Place. And when the borough council finds the money for the new access road it will allow Norfolk Street – now a narrow shambling mixture of cars and shoppers – to be pedestrianised. The new bridge (where, incidentally, the excellent detailing contrasts with the relief road) also helps to keep traffic away from North Brink and Old Market, although this benefit is in danger of being thrown away: at the moment the access from the bridge to Old Market is narrow, and the county council is considering demolishing the eighteenth-century "King's Head" to widen it. This would be a great pity, not because the pub is particularly distinguished but because it provides a natural closure to Old Market.

Wisbech is full of opportunities. A new public library is to be built to fill a hole in the Crescent, and it is encourag-

ing that another Cambridgeshire library in a similar key situation in Ely won a Civic Trust award in 1969. Again Wisbech is like many old towns in providing interesting glimpses down medieval passages and arched entrances to small streets: these could all be improved by painting and clearing away junk. The Civic Trust-inspired street schemes were excellent, but in too few cases have been maintained. Wisbech's Market Place, High Street, and the pedestrianised Norfolk Street could all greatly benefit from such a scheme and maybe the planning authority should provide the impetus and professional help required. Individual businesses must help: for instance, instead of throwing away the pleasant sixteenth-century courtyard the Rose and Crown should exploit it as a feature, perhaps as an outdoor restaurant or beer garden. The Market Place – like many others – becomes a car park during the week.

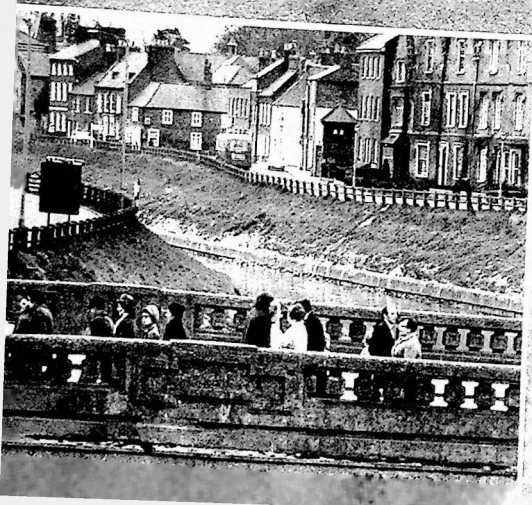
Wisbech's record for finding new uses for old buildings is mixed. The Castle was demolished after the town had refused to buy it for £2000 for use as a school: that was in 1816. More recently the borough council has abandoned ideas of a new civic centre and has settled its offices in a number of old buildings. But the alternatives to demolition are not always properly investigated: for example, Mounpesson House itself could be used by the students or staff of the nearby technical college, remembering that conversions can be less expensive than new buildings. This is an area where central government could again play a part. At the moment the Historic Buildings Bureau, which is limited to trying to find purchasers for listed buildings, is understaffed and not used as widely as it could be. It could usefully be supplemented with a thorough urban conservation service as suggested by Lord Holford.

But, most of all, Wisbech needs convincing that one of its few natural advantages is itself. Properly managed, the town could again be a magnet for local life, might even win people from Peterborough and King's Lynn to live in some of its relatively cheap and beautiful old houses, and should have much to offer the discerning tourist. Yet its all-important character is desperately vulnerable: what has taken centuries to build up could be destroyed in a generation.



Left: the interesting, if not particularly distinguished, Octagon Church (top) in the Old Market has been replaced by the depressing mock-Georgian travesty (centre). The local authorities and the Wisbech Society did not object to the demolition of Mounpesson House (bottom) but the Department of the Environment did; now the building is slowly rotting

Right: a public lavatory dominates the slum-cleared wastes of the Horsefair (top). The pomposity of the mock-Georgian police station (near centre) cannot even be excused by its site and contrasts with the vanity and elegance of the genuine Georgian Brinks (bottom). The inner relief road has successfully reduced traffic in parts of the central area but creates a barrier between commercial and residential districts, exaggerated by the clumsy railings (far right)



THE LA IN CONTEXT - 3

Another country

While we city dwellers talk piously about street furniture and urban conservation areas, out in the country there is ever increasing pressure from urban and suburban type development. Jake Brown looks at the fate of four Buckinghamshire villages and explores approaches to countryside management

The little village of Pitchcott in Buckinghamshire sits on the north escarpment of the Vale of Aylesbury. It looks down over sweeping fields to a tributary of the Tame. A mile to the south the lane, where it crosses the stream, is joined by another lane, once a Roman road which takes local traffic by a backway to the Claydons (Botolph East, Middle and Steeple) and North Marston. It is a pleasant, sweet spot. The old sign post, white with strong fingers and artless but clear typography, was adequate in size, position and clarity. Now this meeting place, this rural junction of lanes, stream and field gates is dominated by an enormous sign, its stubby arms high in the air. It is a splendid object, as it should be since it is a Worboys sign designed by Jock Kinner. But set in that spot it is about as appropriate as a triffid.

Buckinghamshire County Council, like other local authorities, is steadily replacing its old road signs with these new signs. It possesses two kinds of vernacular signposts - an elegant cast iron affair with a ring on the top, and a wooden, no nonsense post painted in black and white stripes. Their removal, while still in a sound state, is one of those mysteries that make the consideration of rural design such a sad business.

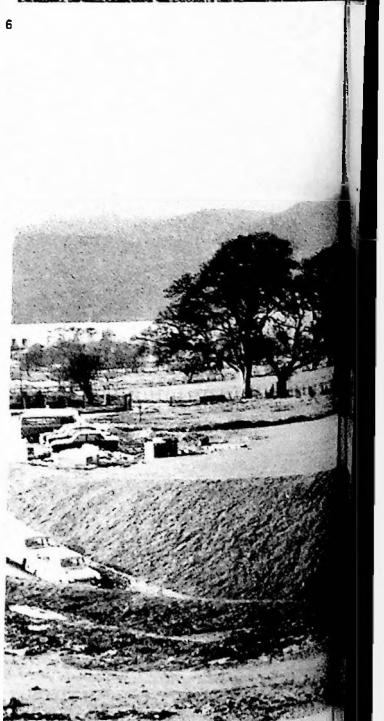
Slight change of scene. Farther to the south there are two other junctions. The road straddles the hogsback spine of Barrack Hill, Brackwell Farm to the left, Whaddenfield Farm to the right. Then the first of the junctions. A lane steeply climbing up from Ashenden and Lower Pollicott and on the other side the climb from Cuddington. A positive clutch of Worboys signs: again no argument against the design in themselves, but no real warning, and a muddle of information. Half a mile later a hidden lane turns off to Lower Winchenden. For the full half mile the old white signpost marking the turning stands out like a lighthouse.

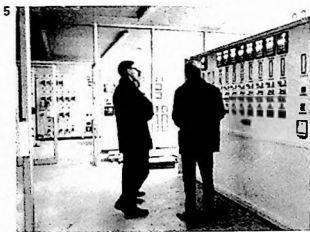
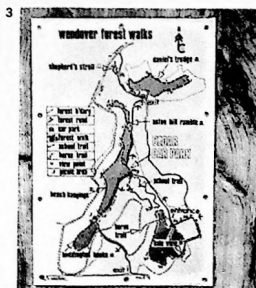
Different scene and different circumstances: the A41 north of Bicester. Trucks and motor cars thumping along, not a wide road but some long views, and the chance to make good speeds.

More Worboys signs, at every cross-roads, and so splendid that they suggest important side roads. But many of them are simply narrow lanes linking the villages and hamlets whose life has less and less connection to the land that once supported them. Many of the signs, therefore, have bracketed qualifications - gated road, single track road. One such junction has 15 different signs within an 80yd area.

These examples of signpost design and placing, actually and symbolically illustrate the predicament, the design conflict, at the heart of rural Britain. It is not just the design of an object that is important. It is its situation. What is adequate design in one place can be a disaster in another. This applies in most areas of design, but it applies especially to the countryside. What is so tragic is that the particular brand of interaction between planning, architecture and industrial design, leavened with worthy preservationist/conservationist attitudes that, have until now, worked with some degree of success, is proving to be inadequate in face of an entirely new situation developing in the countryside.

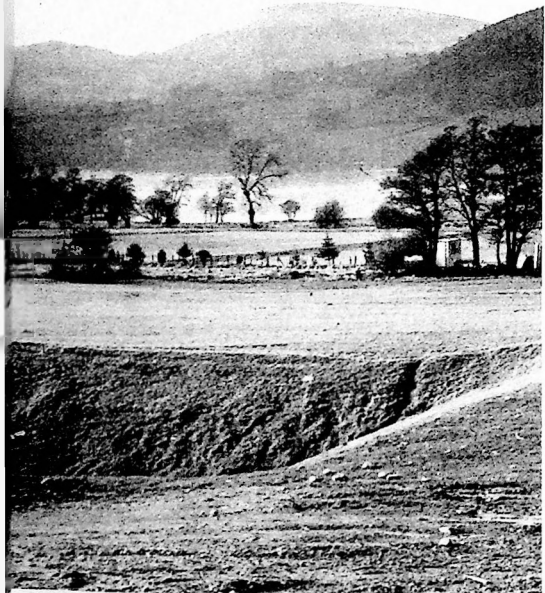
Most of the old techniques have broken down as the problems have changed from those that they were originally intended to deal with. Traditional countryside dwellers are fundamentally trying to alter the patterns established since the eighteenth century and which have come to mean "countryside". Externally, urban pressure on the countryside is now much more intense, more varied and more demanding. What radically affects this situation is that the town dweller still essentially thinks of the countryside as a space that has not been filled, an abhorred vacuum to be filled. Local authorities are finding, because of the internal pressures and relative lack of resources, this urbanisation of the countryside difficult to resist. And there is little choice about the kind of hardware they can use. The phrase "street furniture" means what it says - objects for the spaces between buildings, urban objects designed by urban





1 signpost south of the village of Pitchcott
2 new signs in Buckinghamshire, close to a canal bridge and 4 one of the remaining wooden signposts 6 entrance to the hidden Manchester Corporation pumping station at Ullswater and 5 the control room in the underground complex.
3 Forestry Commission map at Aston Clinton showing track, parallel to existing lane, now opened to cars

Guardian



Guardian

designers. It looks as if the countryside desperately needs a rural vernacular. Yet can there now be such a thing?

Certainly country architecture, except for a handful of eccentric exceptions, has lost all meaning. And as for design, it cannot possibly mean thatched roof garages, ye olde inn signs and rustic rural council offices. Nor should it mean the sort of oversized caricature wild-west log cabins that the Forestry Commission has built at Symonds Yat. Historically, vernacular differences between town and country have been of size and region, not necessarily of design. This is the heart of the criticism of the design itself. The rural failures are a distorted reflection of the urban failures. It is that worst form of urban blight, suburban sprawl, which is also the worst rural blight. The scale may be different, but the effect is as bad.

Again two villages in Buckinghamshire – Brill and Quanton. Both are problem villages, their trade and self-sufficiency affected by Aylesbury, particularly the successful shopping centre (see pages 58–65). Brill is a hilltop village, a close knit place with all the qualities of a small town. It has been the subject of a major preservation report, is unspoilt, well kept and largely devoid of development horrors. Yet the conservation policy which has guarded the centre of Brill has ignored the new outskirts. To the east, out of sight and so presumably out of mind, there is a new housing estate, mini monsters with concrete lamp posts, wire fences and all.

Quanton has the appearance of a once prosperous farming village. It has an oblong street plan and a hillside village green of pretty brick houses with a ruined windmill at the top. It is a sad, silent village, the pubs and shops having a hard time of it – pensioners' rations not being the best basis for a flourishing trade. But it is also now a dormitory village for Aylesbury and London, and that has meant the encroachment of the urban scene. The infill and ribbon development is suburban. At Quanton unlike Brill, someone has made an effort on the new estates – the lamp posts and other street furniture are a passable effort at good design. Yet the net effect is the same.

Preservationist attitudes – and this as much affects the centre of small country towns like Tring, Buckingham and Lavenham – are helping to form a rural schizophrenia. The centre of the villages and towns have become sacrosanct, the edges a free for all. This is the front parlour mentality (to be used only for weddings, funerals and formal visitors, while life goes on in the kitchen back room). If we really have got to hide away, tucked below the skyline, the places in which we really want to live it, but of which we are ashamed to display, then something is profoundly wrong with the shape of society. To want to live in a country village, but turn the new part of it into a nicked off piece of Edgware, is curious. If local authorities and individuals could be persuaded to rebuild bits of existing villages, in a way that has been done with perfectly good results until the present day, instead of

holding them in hallowed regard, then villages are more likely to remain alive and people less inclined to camp in estates round the corner.

It is the attractiveness of the countryside which appeals both to the urban dweller and the urban planner. Yet the demand this creates expresses itself in urban attitudes and urban schemes — access is still not considered as a related facet of the working of the countryside but as an exploitable void. The proposals made in *New Society* for new leisure roads giving access to wild parts of mid Wales, and along the North Downs (with periodic viewing loops) would not open up the countryside; they would destroy it. The countryside can only be entered on its own terms.

In Buckinghamshire, with commendably good intentions, the Forestry Commission has carried out a miniature mid-Wales leisure road system. The woods above Aston Clinton are now officially open to the public and called Wendover Forest Walks. Appallingly ill conceived and obscure maps show recommended walks, school trails, horse trails, "view points" (what a splendid urban idea) and picnic areas. Yet the main result of the scheme has been to open tracks to cars once free for walkers.

There are 207 665 miles of roads in Britain, and only 29 234 miles of them are motorways, trunk or principal roads. In terms of motor car based leisure there would seem little to be gained in scenic terms to allow cars further access to tracks the appearance of which is like that of existing nearby lanes. There is a case for making a few of the forest tracks in Wales and Scotland open roads. So too is there a need for lavatories on trunk roads, and a need for picnic sites at regular intervals along motorways. They exist in West Germany, France, Italy, Denmark and the United States, and there is no good reason why they should not exist in Britain as well. But not at a cost to the local authorities. Some could be attached to motorway service areas, others might be self-supporting. There is also a need for picnic sites like the one at Tottenhoe Knolls to be established by Bedfordshire County Council with the approval and help of the Countryside Commission, which will have parking in a disused quarry.

In many places and circumstances non-design is the solution. The wooden signposts with their nondescript typography and charming, inconsequential signs along the Pembrokeshire coast path opened by the Countryside Commission are absolutely right. Their design priorities are entirely different to the normal legibility criteria. Modern sans serif and good layout would be acceptable, but not as imaginative or suitable. The Countryside Commission's Goyt Valley experiment of closing the through road at weekends, the philosophical opposite of the Forestry Commission's Wendover Forest Walks scheme, is

much more realistic and, in its true sense, design orientated.

The same kinds of paradoxes exist when it comes to the siting of industrial structures and other large scale works. In many cases the powers of local authorities are severely limited when dealing with power stations and oil refineries, telecommunication masts and beacons, and waterworks. Many of them are magnificent additions to the landscape, and local authority doubts more often than not lead to inappropriate attempts to blend the architecture into the landscape or to build giant rockery gardens around them. But there are two threats: mediocrity and quantity. It is one thing to admire one telecommunications tower mast on one hill, one M6 up one Lune Valley, but if every hill is to have a tower, and every valley a motorway (and as consequence every dale a trunk road) then there is a very real threat.

The alternative is to put development underground — which is what Manchester Corporation has done with its pumping station at Ullswater. The station, engineered by Rofe and Rafferty with Colin Faulkes as architectural consultant, cost only £250 000 more to hide in this way. But it is not always the healthiest attitude to be saying, in effect, "brilliant design — many thanks — now bury it out of sight". The answer must be undogmatic and open minded. Let us have landscaping and screening as at Fawley, perhaps burying as at Ullswater, or by all means spectacular and proud display when the situation and skills demand it.

But the time for talk about "soften by careful planning of the plant" or "respect for nature", "design good manners" and all the other easy phrases, is over. We have got to look at the countryside again and decide precisely what we want with as little wishful thinking as possible. The need for the boundaries between town and country to be as sharply drawn, as black and white as possible, has never been so strong. The distinction between town and countryside has been breaking down and should be redefined.

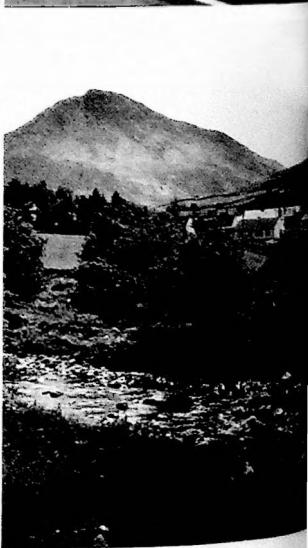
There may not be a need for a country vernacular if the new structures and buildings are planned or built as close knit urban units instead of being spread out in the landscape in the same way as city council flats are spread out on purposeless lawns. We should turn preservation inside out by building genuine new holiday towns and sticking them on promontaries or round bays (in National Parks as well) instead of going to incredible ingenuity to disguise caravan sites (which are de facto towns and villages). And most important of all we must find a completely new way to channel public finance in rural areas, both to ensure adequate facilities that local communities cannot now afford and to balance the various amenity costs against income.



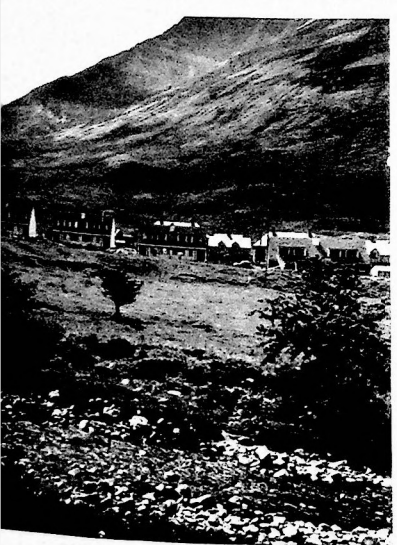
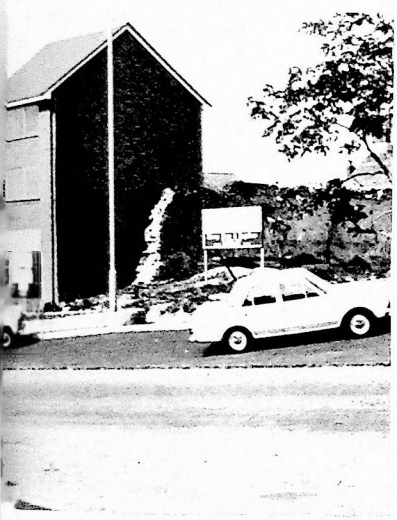
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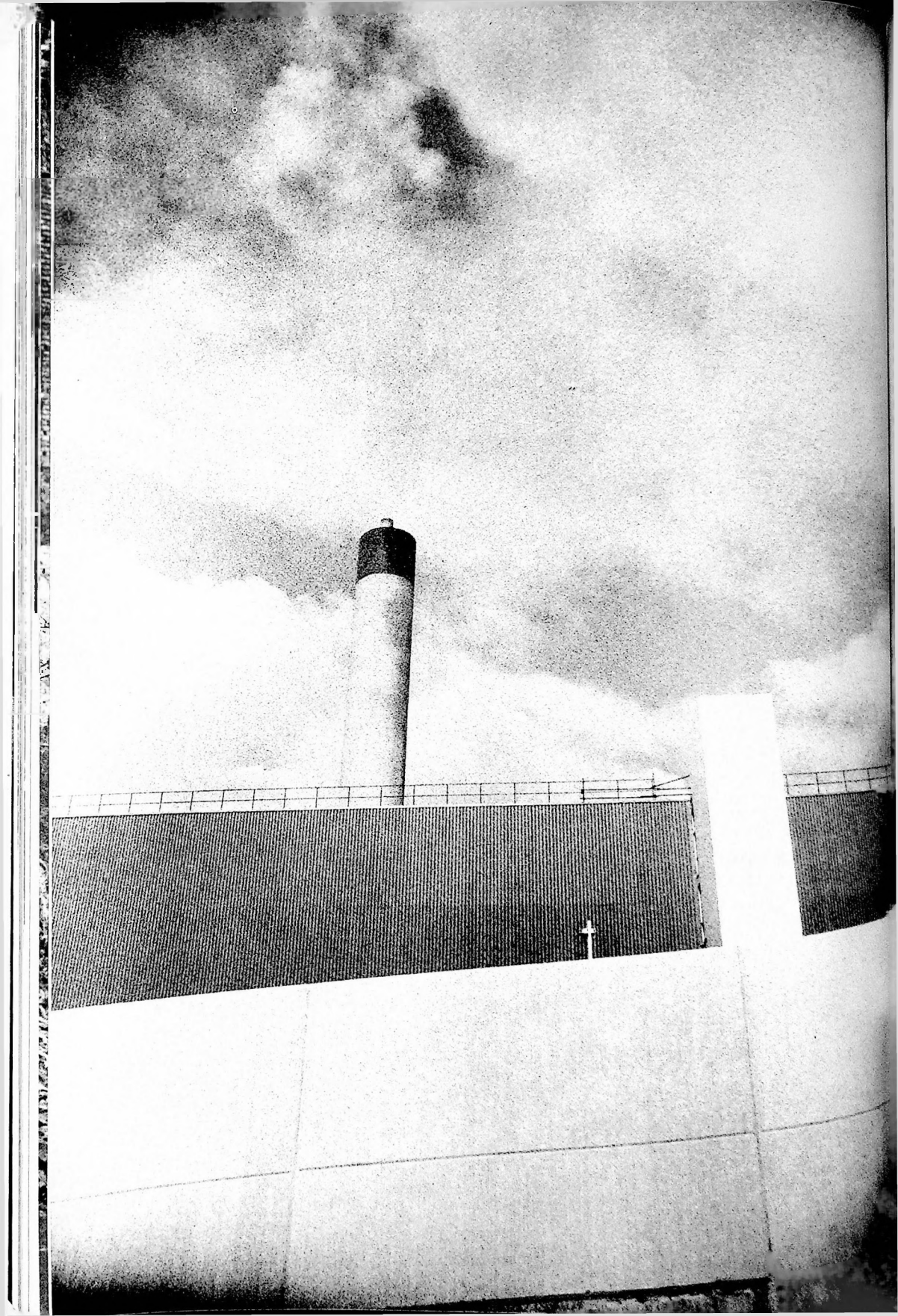
Tom Bligh



1 Brackley, Northamptonshire before street widening and 2 after widening for traffic, with half-hearted infill
3 ribbon estate near Glencoe, Argyllshire
4 village green at Brill, Bucks and 5 concrete lamp posts and wire

fence development behind Brill church
6 Quainton village green and 7 new road at edge of village
8 Goyt Valley before the Countryside Commission's traffic management experiment and 9 after introduction of experiment





FIRE OF LONDON (1971)

A massive incinerator plant, built at Edmonton by the GLC for eight London boroughs, will be a much studied prototype. David Rowlands reports

Rubbish has that timeless appeal to statisticians which promotes a peculiarly invidious example of the numbers game. Politicians, engineers and environmental lobbyists alike reveal with glee that London's annual rubbish turnout, all three million tons of it, would cover St James's Park to a height of 350ft, that in 20 years it will have doubled to occupy 50 million cubic yards, and that in a good year about 100 000 tons of waste glass, iron and paper will be recoverable for a revenue of £650 000. Ninety per cent of the refuse collected by the boroughs and the GLC finds its way to land reclamation sites and the rest comes to a fiery end in one of the 13 incinerators strung around London. The bill for disposing of this growing mountain tops £5 millions.

The GLC came into the refuse disposal business as recently as 1965 following the 1961 Royal Commission on local government in London which recommended a unified organisation to rationalise methods and costs of disposal throughout the area. The Council inherited obsolescent incinerators and inadequate road, barge and rail handing points. Worse, the supply of suitable tipping sites was rapidly drying up and fundamental changes in rubbish composition, principally the near absence of household cinders and ash, worried health officials and reclamation engineers. Large scale direct incineration was suggested as a long term solution and the site for the first plant would be in North London, which had more than its share of disposal problems. At Ed-

monton, where the GLC already operated the Deephams sewage treatment works on the North Circular Road, 27½ acres of land was released.

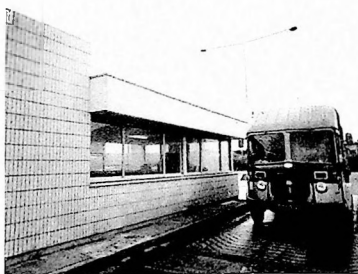
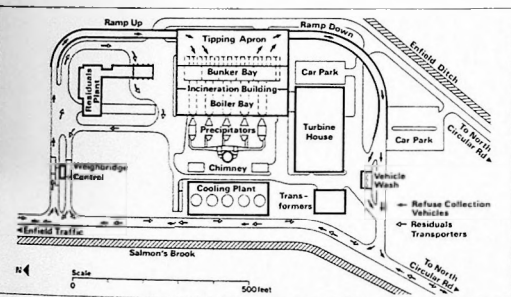
The new plant consists of four sections. In the main building, occupying the centre of the site, is a vast tipping bay 33ft above ground level, its entrance and exit connected to two arms of elevated road which form a crescent around the western side of the plant. The central building also houses a bunker bay, capacity 3900 tons of refuse, the incinerators and boiler plant. Outside are a bank of precipitators to clean flue gases and, dominating everything, a 328ft high twin-flue chimney. A second rectangular block houses turbines which will feed 30MW of electricity onto the National Grid for a revenue of about £500 000 pa. Conveyor belts carry ash and clinkers from the incinerators, under an access road and up through a white grp clad housing to a separate plant for residuals handling. The fourth massing is an all wooden cooling tower block.

Built to handle up to 1800 tons of refuse a day, carried from eight London boroughs within a six-mile radius, the plant is a joint project of the GLC departments of Public Health Engineering and Mechanical & Electrical Services, is engineered by W S Atkins & Partners and constructed by Tarmac Construction Ltd. GLC architects, under Sir Hubert Bennett, have made extensive use of dark green plastics coated steel cladding, supplied by British Steel Corporation to erectors Boddy-Moir Ltd, in the plant

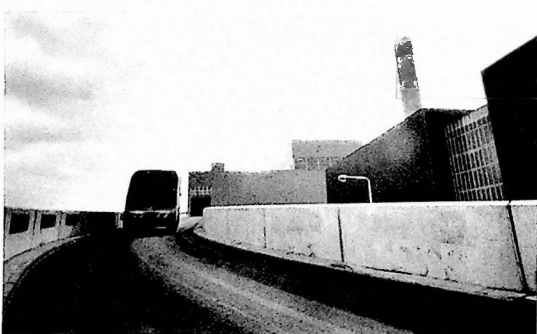
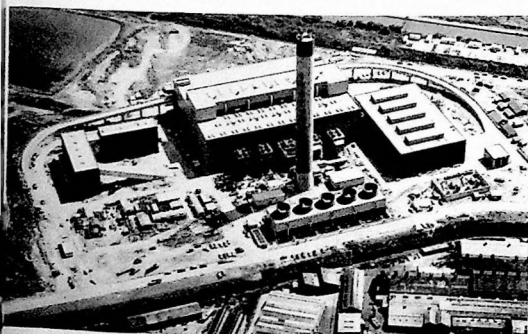
houses, and white ceramic tiles (supplied by Shaw-Hathernware and fitted by Parkinsons Ltd) to face the administration section sited below the tipping apron. The grp conveyor housing is by AB Plastics. The overall effect on this giant plant is bright and crisp, well up with its bold concept combining striking external juxtaposition of plant units with stark functionality within. The incinerator is sited within the proposed Lee Valley Regional Park and extensive associated landscaping is intended to conceal both the plant and the motley assortment of neighbouring industry.

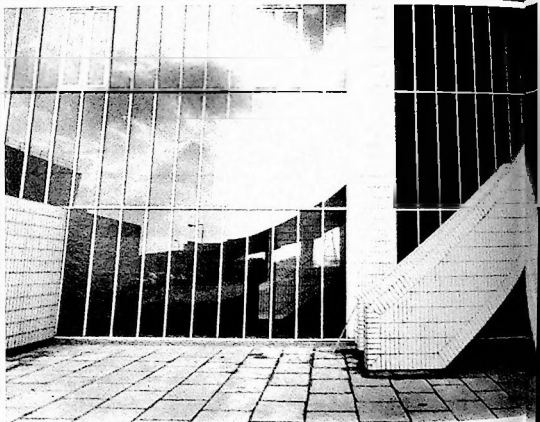
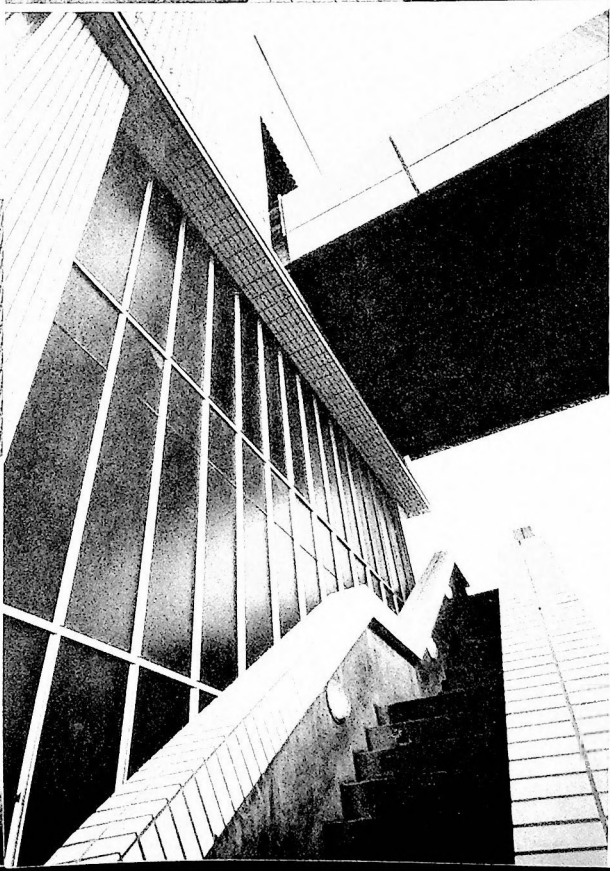
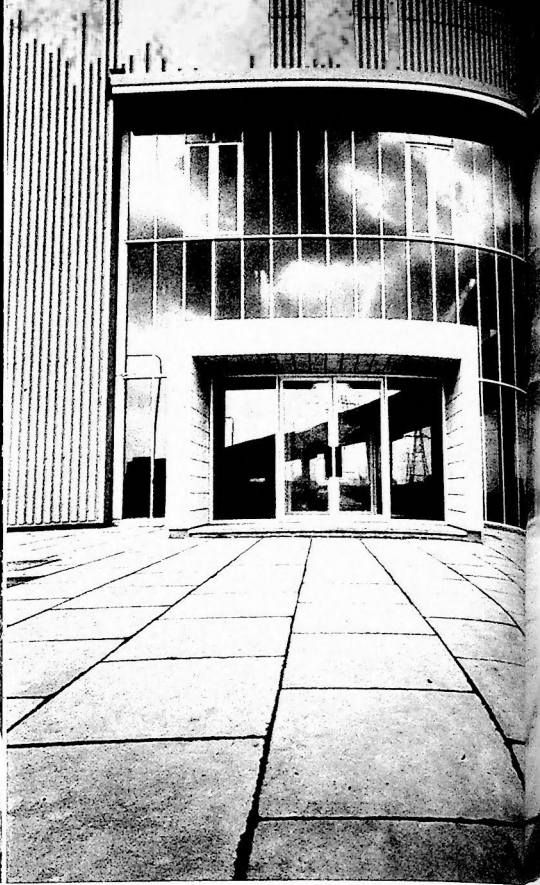
The £10 millions plant is a revolution in disposal techniques. Smell, dust and noise are minimal and although benefits are arguably smaller than they could be (for reasons given below) the plant itself causes few additional environmental problems. The speedy throughput of such vast volumes of offensive material at relatively low cost, offset by sales of ash, scrap and generated power is a model system that is one step nearer the eventual abolition of a foremost modern day fear—inundation in our own material decay. Edmonton is the forerunner of several stations that will ring London. Given the need for a more comprehensive design specification there is no reason why this solution should not largely solve disposal problems for the next 50 years—in combination with systems like vacuum collection from individual homes and techniques for total waste recovery.

Between 600 and 700 refuse wagons



Opposite: the 328ft twin-flue chimney of GLC's Edmonton refuse incinerator dwarfs the dark green plastics coated steel clad plant buildings. Below left: scale of the project can be judged from the aerial view taken during construction. Left: arriving wagons are weighed on a computerised weigh-bridge. Below: they proceed up the ramp to the enclosed tipping apron





Above and left, the main entrance foyer of the administrative block is under the exit ramp from the tipping apron. Extensive use of white ceramic tiles offsets the tinted glass and contrasts well with the darker lines of the main plant. Steps lead to a balcony running the full length of the office block. Inside the foyer the same white tiles, supplied by Shaw-Hathernware, are used and an added touch is a large collage of rubbish pinned together by council employees (cheaper than commissioning an artist).

Right, the vast 312ft concrete tipping apron has 23 bays for discharge of refuse — vehicles are directed to empty bays by the overhead sign gantry controlled from a room above the lorry entrance. Wagons will be entering the bay at the rate of one every 40 seconds between 10am and 4pm. Dust is extracted from the apron area through vents in the wall which lead to extraction plant in the bunker bay.

will be arriving at Edmonton every day, together with up to 100 contractors lorries for removing scrap iron, fly ash and clinkers – a sizable traffic problem. Fortunately the collection pattern in London boroughs is geared to an early morning start, so the first full loads do not reach the plant until 10 am, just after peak rush hour on the North Circular. From then on the wagons arrive at staggered intervals according to the distance they have to cover until work ends around 4 pm, shortly before the second rush hour snarl-up. The distances they travel are no more than when rubbish was taken to central loading and dispersal stations, and in many cases are less. There are few houses in the area to be disturbed by the traffic increase.

On site, unhindered flow-through is essential and a three-part traffic system is in operation. Arriving dustcarts enter from the main road (and from a northern entrance for Enfield traffic) and check in at a computerised double weighbridge. After the vehicle's identity has been established by a number, it is weighed and the computer works out the amount of refuse carried from a comprehensive record of unladen vehicle weights. Then the traffic system splits, with ash and scrap contractors' lorries (which have to be weighed separately) going to the right and refuse wagons sent straight up the first arm of the elevated road (heated to prevent wintertime ice and snow hindrance) to the enclosed tipping apron. The 312ft long reinforced concrete apron forms the roof to a large entrance foyer, first floor offices and

ground floor maintenance workshops. Entering carts are directed to one of 23 tipping bays by backlit cues on a sign gantry worked from a control room high above the apron. After tipping its load into a hopper the cart is driven out of the bay, down the exit ramp and completes the full circle out to the main road. For conscientious drivers, two high pressure spray lorry cleaning machines are installed by the end of the exit ramp.

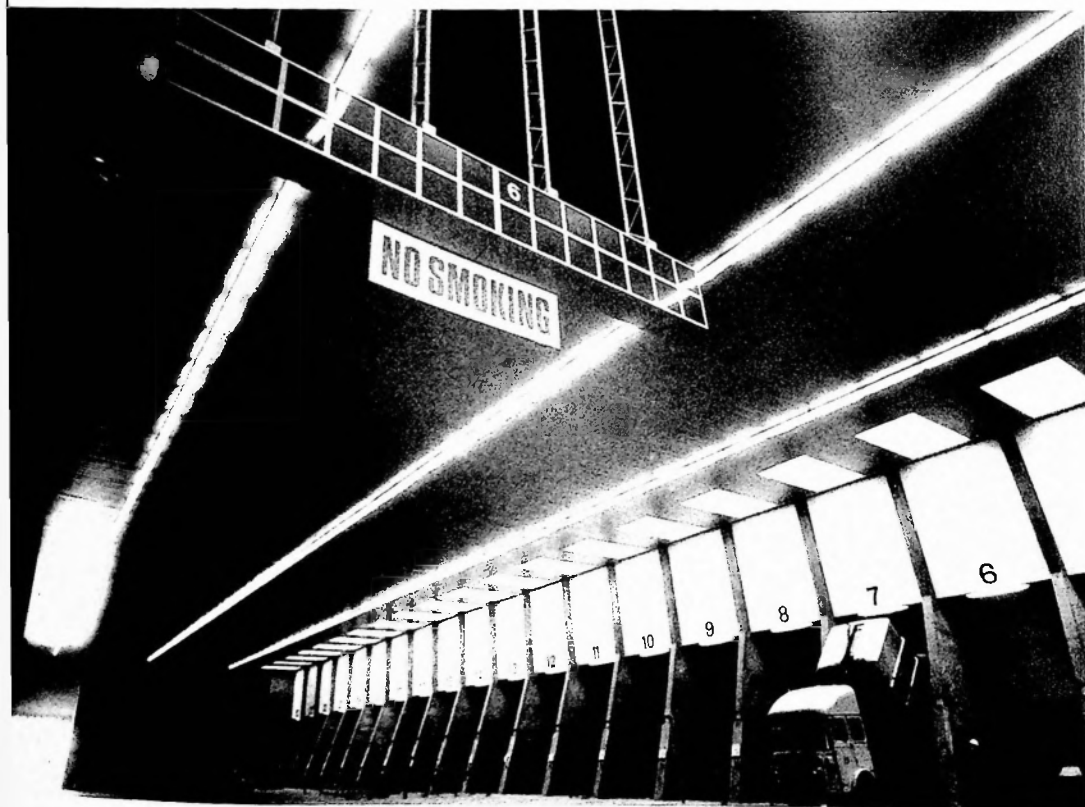
With the cart's departure from the tipping bay, sensed by an ultrasonic eye, a safety barrier automatically rises to stop further tipping and to prevent inadvertent falls into the hopper. Full hoppers discharge into one of five vast 80ft deep storage bunkers enclosed in their own cavern occupying the centre of the main building. The 3900 tons capacity is enough to ensure all day and every day incineration. With each avalanche of waste into the bunker a great cloud of dust arises to be swept away by giant 48 000 cubic ft per minute wet dust extractors, which return damped down soil into the bunker. Ducts also run through the wall to the tipping apron and catch the dust thrown up.

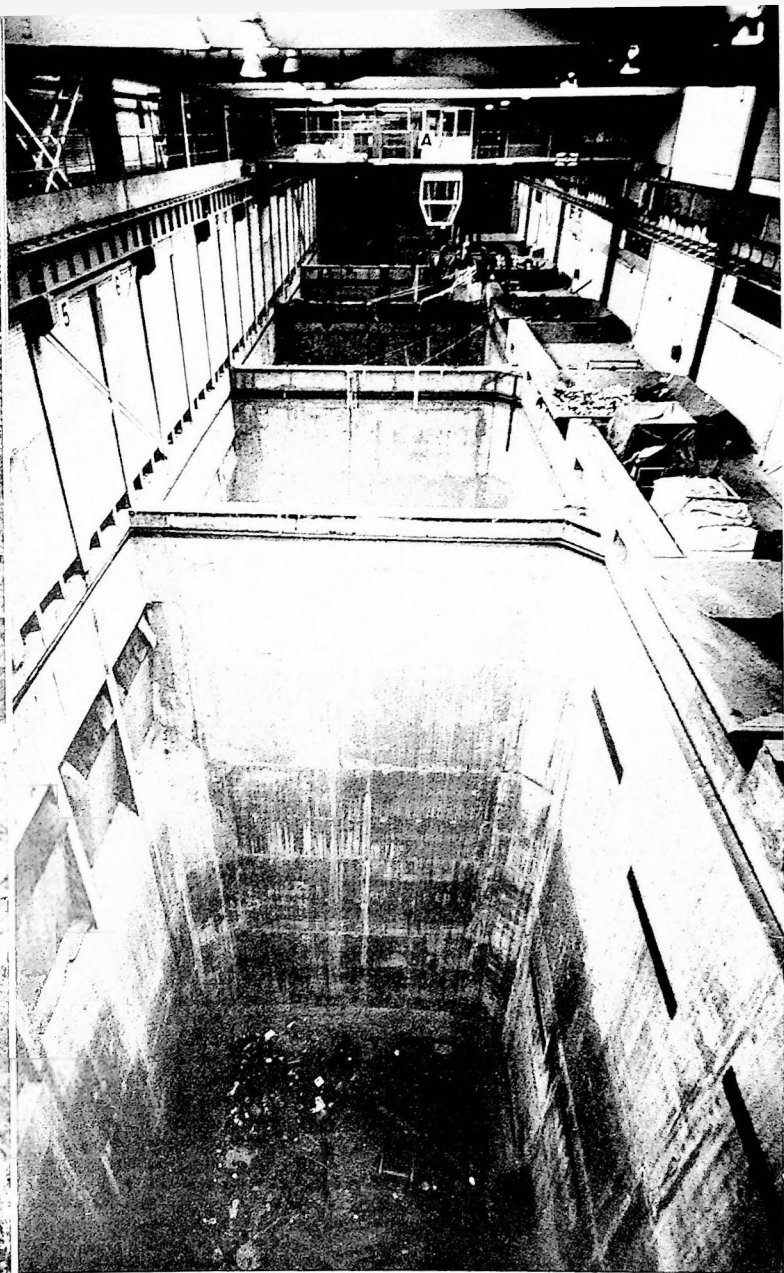
Like huge six-legged spiders, two grab cranes with a third spare, running on overhead rails, transfer refuse from bunker to furnace feed chute. The driver's underslung control cabin is air conditioned as, dust apart, the atmosphere of the bunker chamber is not good.

Hydraulic rams push the garbage from the chutes into the specially designed German VKW stepped roller grates, an inclined series of seven parallel rollers

5ft in diameter and 11ft 6in long, driven at speeds between 1–5 mph. The refuse burning is controlled at between 1700–1900°F by a combination of roller speed and air flow adjustments, air being fed between the rollers from compressors. Combustion is claimed to be almost 99 per cent with only the occasional pile of telephone directories coming through partially unscathed; exhaust gases are fully burnt by extra air jets placed above the burning rubbish. The grates require constant adjustment to suit the varying composition of the refuse. Hot gases pass upward to the five Yarrow boilers which produce a maximum of 86 000lb of steam per hour at 625 psi and 850°F. By 1980 increases in plastics and paper content of the fuel will strengthen its calorific value by 450 BTU/lb and the boilers have been designed with this in mind. However, although there is immediate operator access to the grates and boilers vertically, there is no horizontal connection.

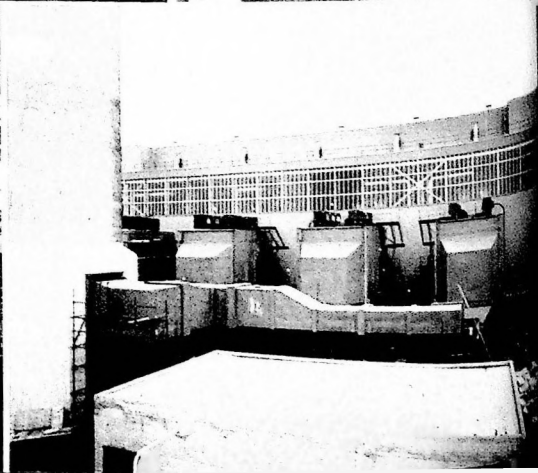
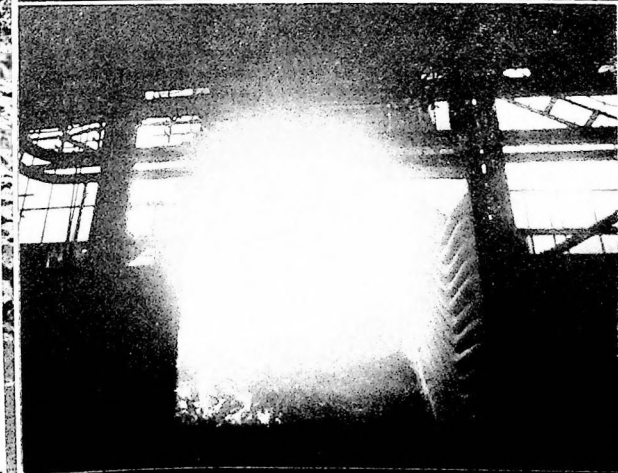
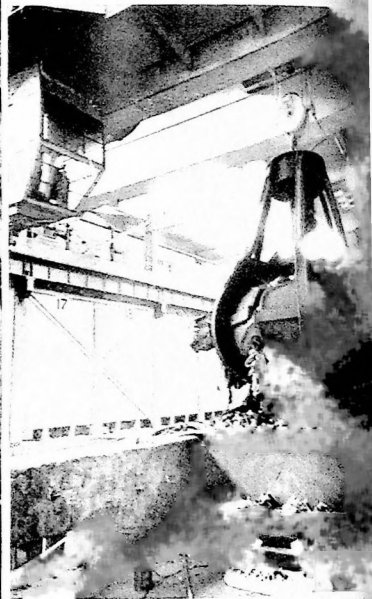
Steam passes from the boiler house to a separate turbine house at right angles to the main building, to feed three of four AEI 12.5 MW generating sets and two 2.5 MW sets which supply in-house current needs. The turbine house is in the hands of ex-CEGB men who say that in terms of modern generating methods some of the power plant's maze of steam pipes and circuits is more complicated than the station demands. A curious anomaly surrounds the in-house sets which cannot yet be connected to supply the incinerator's major equipment – so whilst the plant is exporting

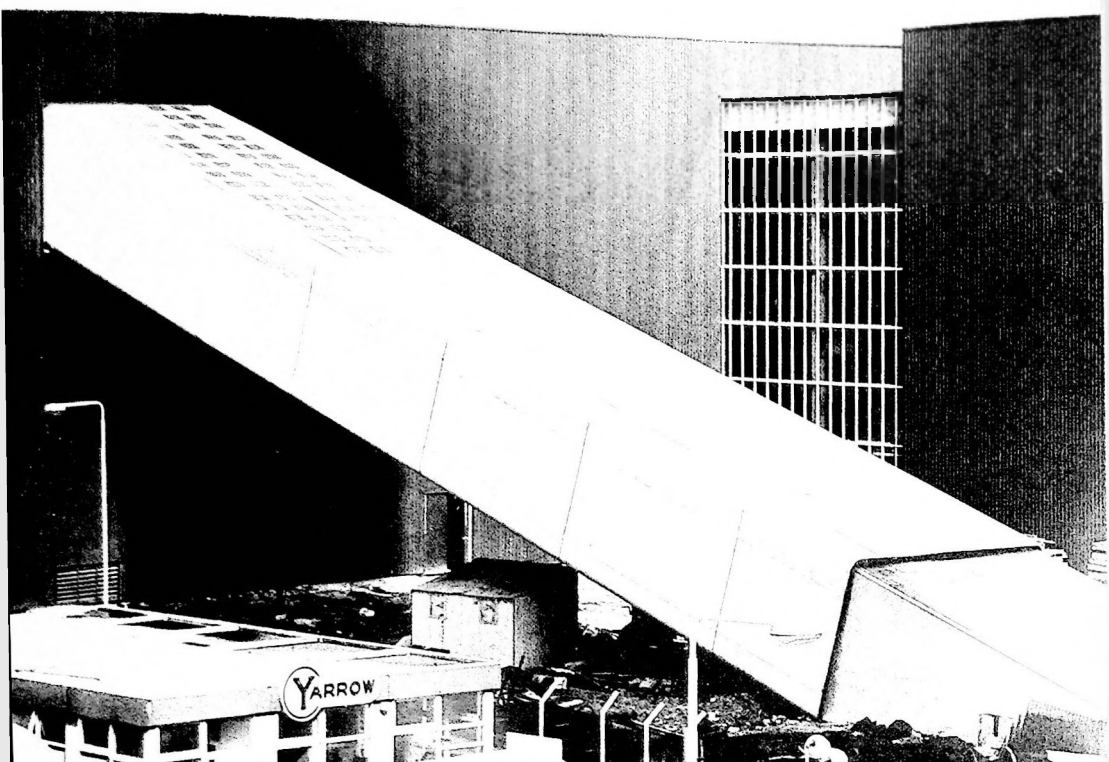




Left: Edmonton's bunker bay has storage capacity for 3500 tons of refuse in five 80ft deep, 40ft square bays; the whole bay is sealed to prevent escape of dust and smell. Dust extractors are mounted on gables above the travelling grab cranes and return dampered down dust from the tipping apron and the bunkers direct into the holds below. The crane operator's cabin is air-conditioned. Below right: the rubbish burns, seen through a viewing panel at the bottom of one of the five VKW stepped roller grates fed by hoppers filled by the grab crane (immediately below). Refuse is pushed from the hoppers into the grates by hydraulic rams. Bottom: five electrostatic and cyclonic precipitators scrub the flue gases before they are discharged from the chimney.

Opposite: twin steel conveyors run underground from the incinerators, carrying the burnt remains up through the provided conveyor housing (top and bottom), to the top of the residual plant.



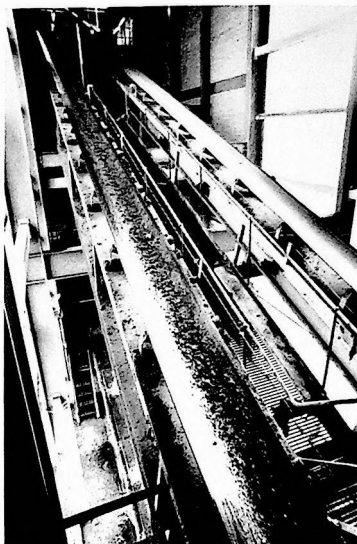


cheap power to the grid it has to be bought back at an ordinary, expensive prices. In the original conception of incinerators of this kind there was to be the dual benefit of power generation and cheap district heating. Apparently Edmonton could support both schemes were it not for the fact that the steam discharged by its turbines is at too low a temperature and pressure to be of any use. Turbines are now on the market that would have solved this problem.

The spent flue gases are cleaned of smoke particles by cyclonic and electrostatic precipitators, the only major plant that stands unclad outside the main buildings. The gases are discharged through the chimney at a temperature of 450°F – well above acidic gas vaporising temperatures – and the result looks remarkably clean from ground level. Fears that the gases themselves may cause pollution, especially from the rising volume of chlorinated plastics waste, are denied by the designers, although a flue gas analysis has not yet been performed. Sulphur levels in refuse are low but the high gas discharge temperature does reflect the fact that excess oxygen used in the incineration certainly fully oxidises a proportion of the sulphur dioxide produced to the more acidic trioxide – given the chance to condense out this would rapidly destroy the heart of the chimney. The GLC points out that the only other station of this kind in the world, run by Dusseldorf's municipal authority (from which valuable design data was obtained) suffered corrosion problems in the furnace refractory linings and flues. The cooling tower house has five counter-flow units which cool the water for the steam condensers. It's a closed circulation water system topped up from the Deephams sewage works effluent channel, ineptly named Salmon Brook. The quantity abstracted is about one million gallons per day.

From the incinerators the hot refuse remains pass through a cooling quench bath onto the twin 6ft wide conveyors running under the boiler bay and up through the grp housing to the top of the residuals plant. One not-to-be missed sight is the magnetic separator at work, picking off ferrous scrap and depositing it into a concrete hopper to be fed through a baler. This scrap emerges as innocuous cubes which are convenient for handling on magnetic cranes, transferring them to contractor's scrap lorries in one of three pull-in bays. The rest of the ash is screened – small clinkers to one bay and larger non-metallic residuals to another. The first makes excellent roadmaking material and the latter is tipped, but there's not enough of it to cause a problem in that respect. The residuals building is acoustically screened by brick walls under the steel cladding.

It would be nonsense to pretend that Edmonton has been constructed and commissioned without some delays, and there are several examples of lack of detailed design which must be rectified. The plant was designed for borough refuse vehicles alone whilst there is some demand for trade waste disposal. Trade wastes are brought in every kind of vehicle from a private car to a security



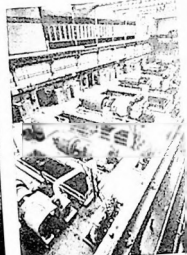
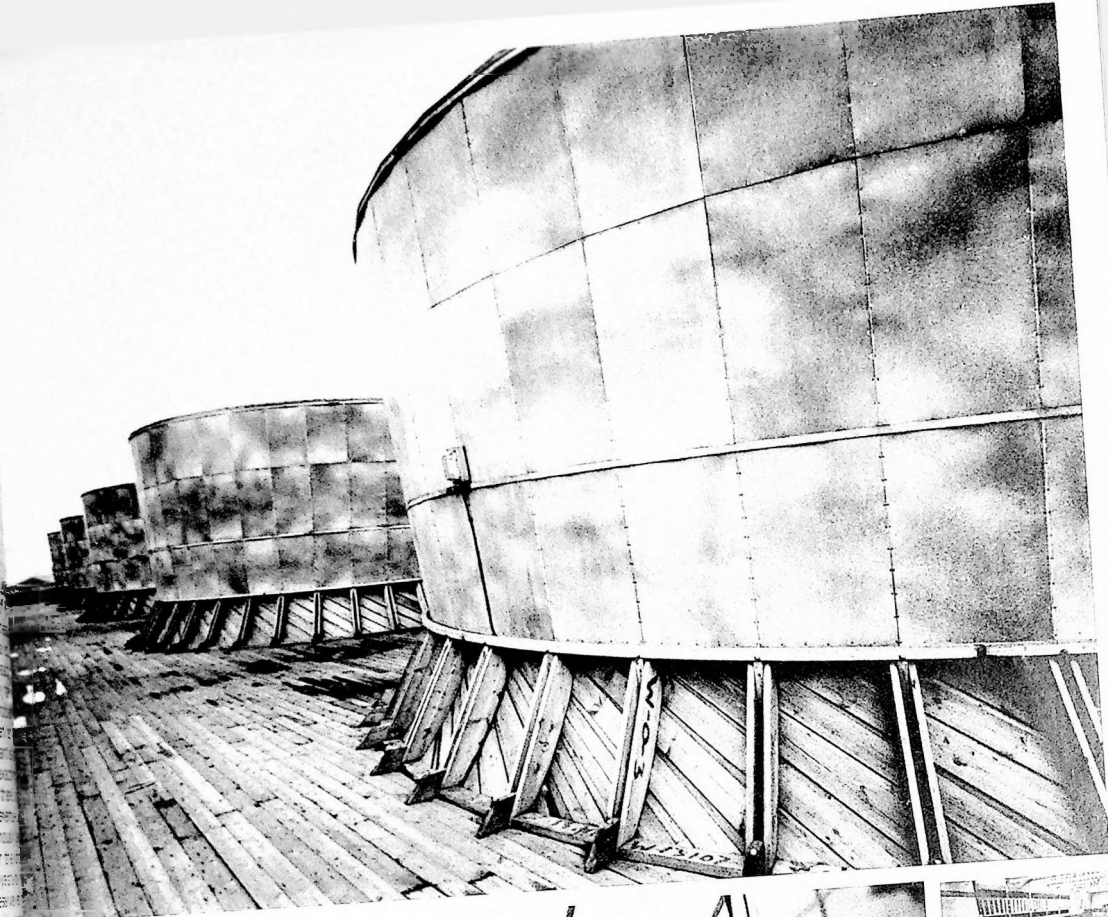
wagon – HM Customs may use the place to cremate seditious literature, and only recently the Home Office burnt a load of police helmets. The admirable traffic flow system is not adaptable to the need for these vehicles to be weighed both in and out of the plant – any volume of this traffic going twice round the plant would cause delays at peak tipping times. In addition, many dust-carts pull paper trailers which have to be parked whilst the vehicle tips (entailing another return trip around the circuit to pick it up again). This fact alone may prompt local authorities to purchase a single standard collection wagon.

The tipping apron was originally designed for full remote control but now needs a superintendent to signal the control room if the rubbish clogs the hopper and does not fall into the bunker. His presence upsets the sonic warning device and causes delays until he moves, allowing hopper emptying to begin. On the other hand he could be there prodding the refuse pile and be hastened to a smelly fall by the rising of the safety barrier. Modifications to these barriers, which have sometimes failed because covered by refuse, are already in hand.

The signs are that it may take another two years to sort out problems which could have been foreseen at an earlier stage. Despite this the plant is operating, fulfilling the giant and exacting task for which it was designed: there's no doubt that the wealth of experience gained in its operation will enormously benefit the GLC's programme for the disposal of London's waste in the years to come and that it sets an impressive example to local authorities in similar predicaments.

Top: Conveyors carry scrap-free ash to the hoppers to await collection by contractor's lorries. Left: Lorries pull up under chutes in one of three bays at ground level in the residuals plant. Centre: a fourth bay is for the collection of bales of scrap metal picked off the conveyor by a magnetic separator and fed into a separate hopper. Conveyor belt running gear and the noisy separator and baler are acoustically screened by the double brick and steel wall of the plant housing

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Top: The five vents atop the wooden cooling tower structure are fed with water from Salmon Brook. Each vent houses a large fan which draws in air and allows considerable size reduction without loss of cooling capacity. Left: the control room (above) where one man watches the state of the turbines and manages Edmonton's contribution to the National Grid - the station supplies in-house needs and can contribute 30MW of electricity to the Grid for a revenue of £500,000.

Projects and developments

Frozen cars make better scrap

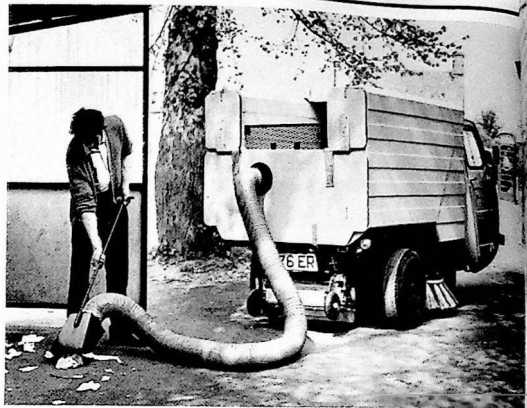
The best way to dispose of old cars is to dump them, à la James Bond, into a machine which squashes them into an easily transported 2ft cube containing ferrous and non-ferrous metals, plastics and rubber. Unfortunately the bale isn't worth much as scrap because it's so mixed and as a result car pressing has to be financed by local authorities. The bales can be shredded and sold as low quality scrap, but very large shredders are required – 2000hp ones are common – and even after magnetic separation it is impossible to get the copper and aluminium content of the steel scrap lower than about 0.2 per cent because the steel tends to wrap itself round bits of non-ferrous material. A high copper content is very bad for steel making.

Robert George of George et Cie in Liege has been experimenting with methods of breaking steel using liquid nitrogen for two or three years. At temperatures around minus 100°C steel becomes brittle and can be broken by a hammer, while other metals in cars – stainless steel, aluminium, copper and bronze – do not fragment. Helped by Air Liquide of France, George installed a cryogenic tunnel between his car press and the shredder and found that he needed little more than 200hp to shred the bales. All the steel from the bodywork cracks up into flakes the size of conifer needles, and can be separated from the other metals by a simple grid. A magnetic separator removes the small parts in other metals – the dust which is all that remains of rubber,

plastics, fabrics and paint is blown away – high quality scrap remains. This has a copper content of 0.08 per cent and is suitable for continuous feeding to electric furnaces because it is fine and consistently sized. Some of it is small enough to be used directly for powder metallurgy, or it could be melted by oxygen lance and reused immediately.

The second conveyor that comes out of the shredder is in some ways even more interesting. It has aluminium, chromium steels, copper, bronze and high tensile steels, all stripped of paint, insulation, plastics, and low grade steel. For example, the bearings and unions from the back axles are stripped out of their casings almost intact, as are bronze bushes. All copper wiring is stripped of insulation. This conveyor can be sorted over by hand to produce a variety of even more valuable scrap.

At present the process is at prototype stage – the installation moves 5 tons an hour – but preliminary results suggest that the cost of the liquid nitrogen is offset by the much smaller power requirement of the shredder so the resulting scrap is all profit. Robert George is building a fully enclosed 20 ton per hour version which will separate even more materials. If his invention is a success – British, German and American firms are bidding for licences – derelict cars could be snapped up as soon as they are abandoned and mining firms could be fighting to exploit municipal graveyards instead of despoiling the National Parks. The system works for other things beside cars – Mr George has even tried it on computers.



Road-sweeping three-wheeler

Present road-sweeping vehicles are expensive and bulky, unmatched to the demands of rural authorities and too heavy to mount the kerb and operate in pedestrian precincts. A recently developed alternative is Melford Engineering's three-wheeled suction sweeper, equally suited to continuous work along kerbs and, because of its short base and ability to turn within its own length, tree or furniture obstructed areas.

The vehicle is equipped with twin side rotating brushes which flick rubbish into the path of a pick-up brush

and a suction nozzle – the vacuum is as great as that used for many large machines. Each brush is powered by a separate hydraulic motor which bypasses problems of belt slip and stretch, and the possibility of clogging by litter. Litter is collected in a 1½ cu yd hydraulically tipped grit hopper and power is from two identical 700cc petrol engines, delivering a rather racy top speed of 54mph.

Optional equipment extends the range of jobs the vehicle can tackle considerably – a 15ft vacuum hose can be used to clean out bus shelters and under park benches and for winter there's a snow plough blade and a salt and grit spreader.



Desalination plant for Ipswich

Ipswich Borough Council should benefit from a £2 millions experimental sea water desalination plant, recently authorised by the Department of the Environment, with one million gallons of drinking water per day. This will supplement their already overtaxed supply from bore holes, which are becoming saline through seepage from the Wash. The plant is the result of nine years' work by the UKAEA and Simon Engineering Ltd on the secondary refrigeration process (see DESIGN 255/59) and will be built by Simon Carves, an SEL subsidiary. It will be the largest of its type in the world although it is still to be considered as a pilot plant to prove the commercial potential, design, construction and operating aspects of the research programme.

The plan is to abstract a million gallons per day of sea water from the River Deben estuary and pump it to a one million gallon reservoir near the existing Ipswich treatment works. After settlement at the reservoir brine will be pumped into a crystalliser with liquid butane – the butane evaporates and removes its latent heat of evaporation from the system. Salt-free ice crystals form and the resulting ice-brine slurry is pumped to a wash tower which allows the salty waste to drain away. After washing with recirculated product water the crystals will be melted, debutanised and pumped out of the plant to be mixed with the town's conventional supply. The melting is carried out by passing butane gas over the crystals – this effectively reliquesfies the gas which can then be returned to the crystallizing plant.

A big attraction of this process is that it only requires electricity in the way of

power supplies – previous plants operating on the flash distillation principle, required a nearby source of heat like a power station, or extensive in-plant facilities for steam raising. By reducing the size and dependence on other facilities the designers feel that freezing plants may be acceptable developments for coastline siting. Simon Engineering have already built a 10,000 gallons per day pilot plant which was designed so that the main process units could be studied separately. The Ipswich plant will provide the first demonstration of the integrated performance of the process in open cycle operation – continuous supply of water from the sea and disposal of the product water and brine concentrate.

Kerbside guide to motorway entry

Raytheon, of Sudbury, Massachusetts have developed under a £625,000 US Department of Transportation contract a computerised system of warning lights designed to slot cars entering fast moving motorway traffic streams into safe gaps. The system enables a driver to adjust his speed to move into the gap in the short space of the ascending or descending access ramp or slip road. Appropriately enough, the prototype model has been extensively tested on drivers entering Route 128, the road that is famed for its almost endless string of government and military research stations and associated technology based industry.

In the Raytheon system vehicle lengths, spacing and speed are sensed by a series of radio frequency loops operating at 96–106 KHz installed under the motorway surface for about 600yd before the access point. These

eed pulsed signals to a roadside Raytheon 703 computer, controlling bands of individually switched lights mounted on the verges of the access ramps or roads. The computer switches these lamps on and off in such a way that an illuminated band appears to move up the slip road - each band moves at the speed of the motorway traffic and corresponds to a safe gap for access. When a driver approaches the motorway he only has to ensure that his car is in phase with one of the illuminated bands to complete a perfectly controlled entry into the traffic stream. If he finds all the lights are on, the motorway is completely clear; conversely, if all the lights are off it is jammed.

One can't help thinking that a more natural representation would be for the driver to associate with lights in the off position, this total illumination would indicate a hazard situation more in line with current warning practice. Despite this the system could be a valuable contribution to safety on both urban and inter-city routes. Raytheon also hope to modify the basic idea to control multiple conveyor feed systems in factories.

Bleeps from the rough

Stephen Horcher of Euroincs Ltd has invented a golf ball for the novice who tends to lose a proportion of his shots in the rough. The Bleeper golf ball, similar in constitution and playing characteristics to other balls on the market, has a minute radio transmitter encapsulated in its Araldite resin core. When you lose the Bleeper all you have to do is wander over to where you last saw it, tune in a transistor radio to around 300 metres on the medium wave band and cast around with it rather like a mine-detector. Your proximity to the ball is indicated by the intensity of a high-pitched scream from your radio.

Present prototypes have a range of only about 10ft - the transmitter is very low powered and operates on the induction principle rather than radiating more powerful and interfering radio waves. The models that will be in the



shops in a few weeks will have a slightly longer range of 20yd and future Bleepers may be tuned to transmit in the VHF band (although these will need a Post Office licence). Power for the transmitter can be from two sources, a zinc-manganese cell lasting six months or a more stable mercury cell with a life of two years. Present golf balls cost between 35p and 75p - so you may think that the £1.35 you pay for a Bleeper would be better invested in lessons from the club professional.

Plastics hoppers defeat the snow

With a mild winter behind them many local authorities must be thinking in terms of maintaining their present fleet of gritting and salting lorries at the 1970 level although they must realise by now that the weather will catch them out one year. At least that's the view of Atkinson's of Clitheroe whose 1971 range of road gritting and salting machines have hopper bodies (made by Bennet Plastics) to counter the immense corrosion problems experienced with their traditionally metal predecessors.

The main resin used is of low viscosity to give thorough wetting of the glass



fibre and complete elimination of voids in the moulding. A gel coat finish applied to the laminate has resilient properties to provide resistance to crazing under rough treatment. The use of plastics for areas in contact with the rock salt has brought additional operator benefits. The hoppers are permanently pigmented a bright yellow during manufacture and require no paint maintenance whilst their light one-piece construction simplifies separation for cleaning. The lighter construction also gives a lower gross vehicle weight. The change from sheet metal fabrication to moulded plastics has allowed the Atkinson design team some scope - they have been able to amend hopper contours to give better flow of materials.

Tungsten-halogen at any angle

There is one drawback to tungsten-halogen lamps - although they are brighter and whiter than mercury, sodium or filament alternatives they have to be operated in a strictly vertical or horizontal position. This is because any slight deviation may favour the setting up of diffusion and convection processes that lead to separation of iodine from the inert filling gas. One end of the lamp becomes deficient in iodine and allows the tungsten filament to coat and blacken the lamp glass - this in turn leads to heat absorption and cracking.

The ideal answer would be to match the weights of the halogen and the inert gas but only iodine is sufficiently unreactive to leave the tungsten filament undamaged by the lamp's electrochemical process. A new class of halogen compounds, halophosphonitriles, developed by Thorn Lighting researchers is claimed to overcome the problem. The compounds act as a chemical reservoir of halogen, only releasing enough of it at any one time to allow the reaction to take place and mopping up any local excesses that may build up at points in the lamp tube. The particular compound used from the series can be matched with a specific inert gas filling to eliminate previous mass differences in the gases.

This research has had several consequences. One is that lighting en-

gineers no longer need to be as finicky in their mounting of the lamps, as blackening need no longer occur. More important, lighting chemists can now use the other halogen elements, chlorine and bromine, because the new system reduces their ability to attack the tungsten filament. Both these substances give greater luminous efficiency than iodine, producing a brighter and whiter light.

Rail track recorded on film

A new ultrasonic rail testing train, designed and built by British Rail and Wells Krautkramer Ltd, can check up to 100 miles of track a day - freeing BR's trained handset operators (who used to walk the length and breadth of the rail system) for more frequent examination of points and crossings. The two-part train consists of a power car with crew's living quarters and a specially adapted unit carrying the underslung ultrasonic probe equipment, operator's controls and recording instruments.

The console has two banks of flaw detectors on each side of a manual control panel - each bank handles information from one side of the track. The four detectors mounted in the bank are an air sound probe checking rail fitments, a vertical energy transmitter sounding for horizontal defects, two 37° probes angled towards one

another to detect inclined defects, and two 67° probes to find vertical cracks in the railhead. Four associated display monitors convert the information into a form suitable for photographic recording. The recorder cameras, mounted behind the console have 1000ft, 35mm film magazines driven directly from the vehicle wheels by a flexible drive shaft giving a film-to-track ratio of 100:1. A mirror system between the two cameras allows recording on either or both films simultaneously and enables the operator to continue recording at the end of a film spool without stopping the train. The ultrasonic probes maintain contact with the rail through a thin film of water piped from tanks with capacity (six tons) for two days' work.

The train is driven from either end; in addition to the normal instruments the driver has controls for raising and lowering probes to prevent damage at crossings and junctions. A second operator, the logger, sits in the centre of the cab and transfers distance marks, taken from track mile post readings, directly onto the film recorder via a keyboard to identify the particular section of track being tested. The train captain manually records unusual track features on tape and also has a small keyboard to label bridges and tunnels on the film record. Data is evaluated at BR's new Paddington centre where defects can be located to the nearest yard within a week of testing.



Liquid crystals for display terminals?

Most current graphic display terminals for computer data recall and instrumentation rely on the cathode ray tube, a bulky high voltage unit which is potentially explosive because it has to be pumped down to very low pressures. Many possible alternative systems have been proposed recently, but few have survived the research stage. Siemens' research laboratories in Munich have their own promising development which exploits the properties of nematic liquid crystals. These peculiar chemicals have long been known to change their optical properties under the influence of temperature but recently they were also found to respond to an electrical field.

Siemens propose to enclose a thin layer of the liquid crystals between two sheets of glass coated on the inside with an electrically conductive surface. By etching certain structures in the conductive layer it is possible to apply

an electric field to parts of the film in the configuration of a series of characters or numbers. Depending on the type of liquid crystal used the character or number shows as an opaque area in the film or one of a different colour. The most convenient way of depicting characters is by forming them from the international standard dot pattern. As the effect is purely reflective the displays would work better in well-lit surroundings; CRTs, generating their own weak light, usually need lower ambient light levels.

Siemens have built some trial models of the system and see no reason why it should not be built into instrument display data systems and sign boards of any size. One step into the future is the possibility of using liquid crystals to make a tv screen that would be a fraction of the size and weight of present models. Further size reductions would come from the electronics units which would no longer need to be built to handle high voltages as the system has very low electric power requirements.

Things seen



Clean cut The International Harvester Cadet 60, produced in the US, distributed in Britain by Rolfe's Mini Tractors, is a grp-bodied rotary riding mower powered by a 6hp petrol engine. Equally useful for rolling,

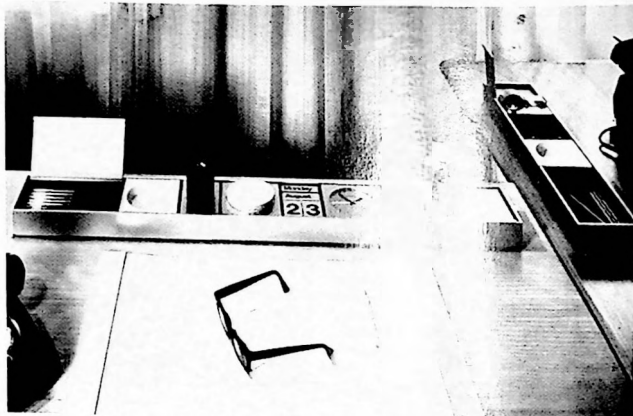
spiking, leaf sweeping and snow clearance the mower cuts a 32in swathe - its high flotation tyres leave no impression on grass and cuttings are discharged at the rear of the machine for safety.



Words on wheels Mobile language laboratories called Words-on-Wheels, of a type currently being used in eight secondary schools in East Sussex, are to be marketed at about £7000 per unit. Consisting of classroom equipment for 32 children, control console and master tape recorders connected by cables to remote-controlled tape decks in the van, the unit has been a great success in Sussex. It is particularly applicable to groups of fairly small, rural schools where the capital expenditure on permanent language laboratory installations could not be justified.

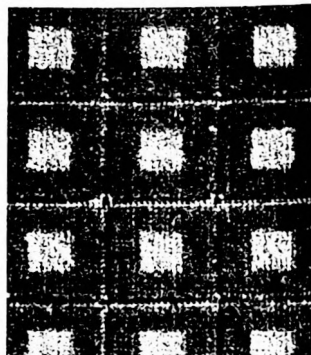
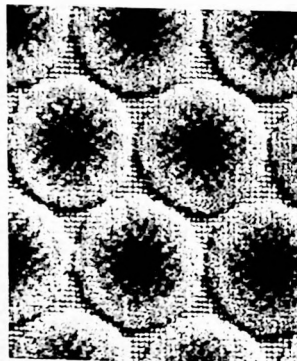
Desk set par excellence Designed by Height and Guille for Artifact Ltd. Channel One is a desk top system for offices. An extruded anodised aluminium channel holds a variety of aluminium slot-in accessories, ranging from a clock to a coin-dispenser, a clothes brush to a vase, with liners and dividers in grey pvc. There are four standard packs,

from 475mm to 935mm long, the simplest, intended for clerical use, being an arrangement of scoops and boxes; the glossiest, intended for top executives, having such esoteric fittings as cigar boxes, vases and nameplates. Accessories may be purchased individually, and the smallest standard pack costs approximately £8.97



Set of six New upholstery designs by Nanna Ditzel for Interspace, Rosemont Road, London, NW3. The two shown here are Hot Spot, below left and Quadrat. All are 51in wide, come

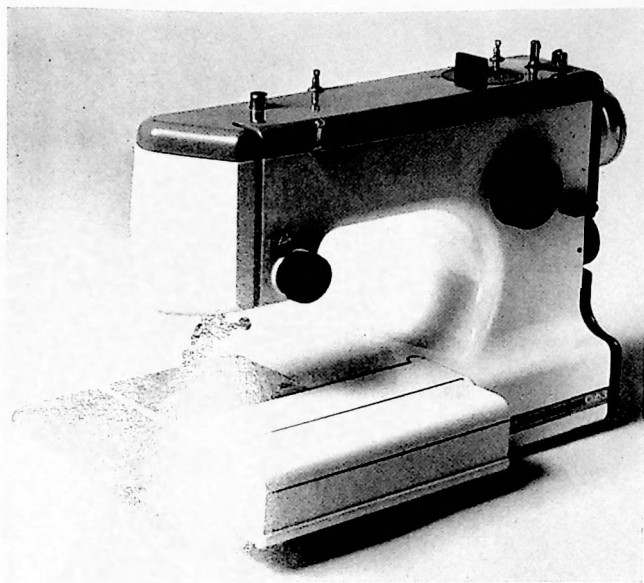
in three colourways and are available in 100 per cent wool pile or a wool and cotton mixture. Quadrat and Hot Spot are £4.80 per yd, and Mille Fleure £5.30 per yd.



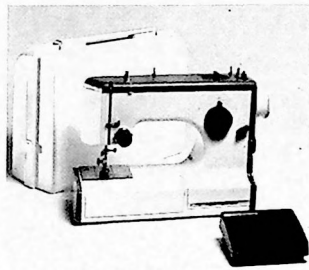
Super sleeper From Proposals, a new shop at 289 King's Road, marketing Saporiti Italian furniture, comes this black wood and fibreglass bed. Headboard contains storage space for pillows and blankets and has

cupboards with drop-down doors, one of which forms a bedside table. The super price, for base, headboard and cupboards only, is £250. The bedcover is from Saporiti range of fabrics.

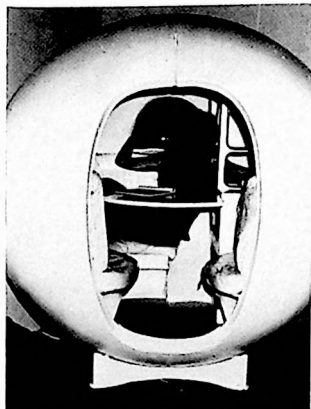




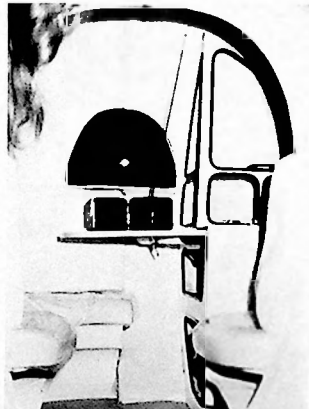
Sewn up Made in Japan, Frister and Rossmann's sewing machines have earned a reputation for quality and good value. Their latest machine, the Cub 3, was designed by Kenneth Grange to be compact (11½in x 15½in x 5½in), light (15lb) and easy to use. The machine's working surface can be extended by using the upper surface of the foldaway storage box and by



a flip-up ledge at the side. The Cub 3 performs the following automatic stitches: straight, zigzag, blind hem, mending or three step zigzag, a decorative pattern and button-hole making. Colours are cream and brown for the body of the machine, blue for the controls. Retail price of around £58 includes carrying case and foot control.

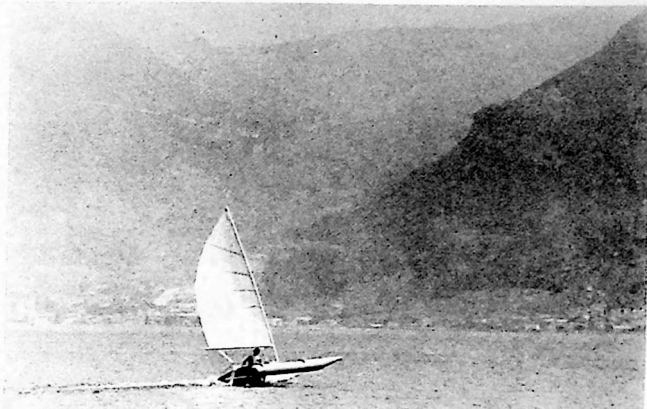
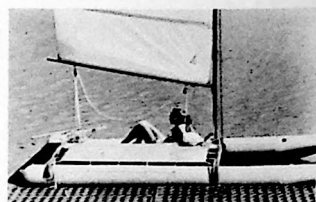


Bolt hole For those who want escape from the noisy world, French designer Claude Vidili suggests this white polyester nest which he calls La Sphere d'Isolément. Padded to deaden exterior noises, it has shelves, a smoked alutglas floor, bench seats which convert to beds and a table which folds away. Vidili thinks its possible uses are wide,

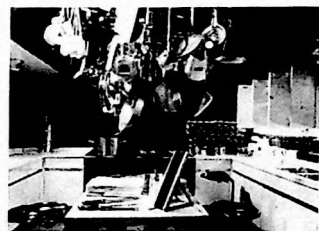


both in the home where it could be used as a study, for watching television, listening to music or sleeping, and in the world of commerce where it could form a reception bureau, exhibition stand, sales kiosk or inner office — the list is virtually endless. The sphere breaks down into four sections for transport.

Baby cat Pirelli's PV4 catamaran, designed by Roberto Lucci of L/O Design, is wholly collapsible with inflatable hulls in rubber fabric and, weighing only 148lb, presents no carrying problems. Its safe close-hauled attitude and easy handling are attributed to its broad 8ft beam and junk-rigged sail — features which also make the catamaran fast enough to be fun.



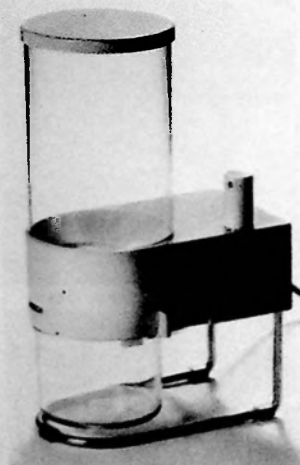
Wonderful world of steel The British Steel Corporation's 4000 sq ft stand at the Ideal Home exhibition was created by a design team led by Lord Snowdon, Terence Conran and Oliver Gregory. It featured a futuristic bathroom, designed by Lord Snowdon, made up of four semi-circular steel cubicles containing respectively shower, dryer, wash basin and wc. Shown here are a kitchen, right, and a sitting area, below, with steel appliqué cushions.



Big squeeze The Braun Citromatic juice extractor, designed by Dieter Rams and the Braun design team, and manufactured under licence in Spain, won a gold Delta award 1970 from the Spanish Association of Industrial Design. Another foreign designed product, the Sottsass/Olivetti Lettera 36 electric portable typewriter also won a gold delta. Among the home grown products to be recognised were: a steel framed mobile wardrobe designed by Coll/Trias/Canellas/Riart/Bigas and made by Lamper; and a range of containers in tubular steel designed by Biyaso Balcells and made by Modulo Muebles.

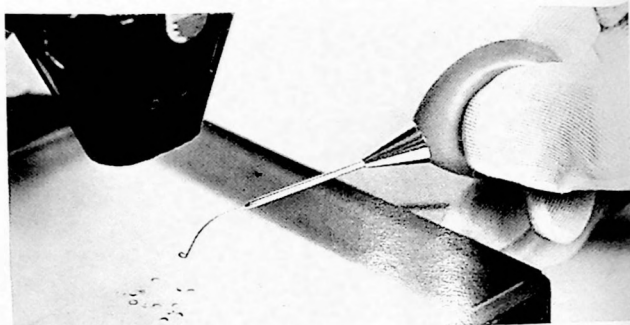
Cook's corner Beautiful stainless steel cooking pots are part of a range for oven or hob designed by Timo Sarpaneva and manufactured by Opa Oy of Finland. They have bases

3mm thick of injected aluminium, and their deep, curved lids can be used as separate serving dishes. The range also includes matching tea pots, kettles and casseroles.



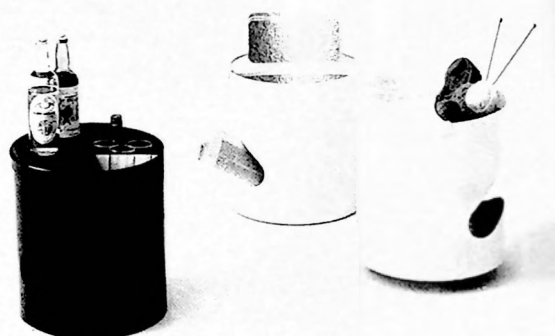
Come for coffee Combined coffee bean container and electric grinder from Germany. For either wall or table use, it is manufactured by Robert Bosch GmbH of Leinfelden. Designed by Bosch-Design-Abteilung.

Clocking in Time is indicated by two rotating metal drums in this Chronotrope battery-operated table clock. In a hexagonal case of fluorescent red acrylic, it was designed by Michael Russ and is made by 20th Century Timepieces, 57 Ringwood Close, Furnace Green, Crawley, Sussex. Approximate retail price £18.90.



Handle with care Manufactured by Allmodels Engineering Ltd, 91 Manor Way, Ruislip, Middlesex, this vacuum pipette tool was designed by J R Spiers, and is called the Vacquette. It is intended for handling

components like a red rubber bulb, bright nickel finish, 12 inches long, weighing 12 ounces. Approximate retail price is £12.50.



Colombo's holdall Injection moulded abs cylinder designed by Joe Colombo is basically an occasional table on wheels or with

adjustable feet. Other suggested uses: as a magazine rack, bar umbrella stand, linen basket (with seat), flower holder or waste paper basket.



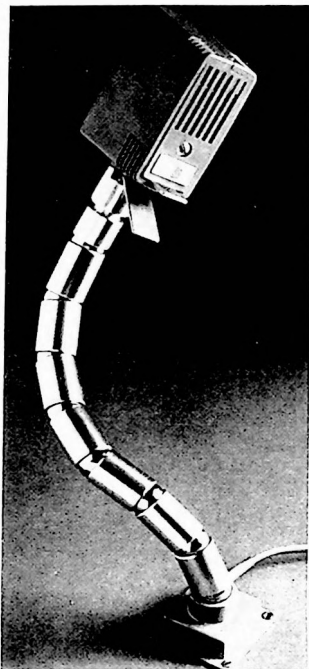
High flyer Coping with fires in high rise buildings is an ever-increasing problem that this new 85ft version of Simon Engineering's Snorkel hydraulic platform brings within grasp. The

dual-controlled arm, operated from the cage or the ground, is mounted on an ERF Rolls-Royce powered chassis with four hydraulic jacks to provide stability.



Ray of sunshine Daray 1200 provides light as close as possible to sunlight for high precision work. Easily adjustable, rock-steady and safe in use, it is supported on a "spinal column" with a stainless steel cable running through the axis, tensioned by disc springs. Chrome plated levers are squeezed to relax the cable and adjust the position of the light head. It is designed and made by Lewis Spring Products Ltd, Chain Bridge, Lake Street, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire. The Daray 1200 is available with three different bases and a compact transformer. Price £28.75

Flexible parking Suffered by the visual intrusion of bulky parking meters, Kenneth Freivokh, a lecturer at the School of Industrial Design, has developed at the Royal College of Art a portable parking meter. Designed for car parks where meters now dominate the scene, it can be fixed to the windscreen of a car by a circular rubber sucker and stored away when not in use. The mechanism is contained in a disposable 80mm x 25mm cylinder made of two injection moulded sections of styrene acrylnitril which has good shock absorbing properties. The meter indicator provides for two different parking time allowances (one red, one orange) and the motorist pays for his parking in advance each time he collects a new meter (possibly at a post office). There is a hand-operated knob system for each time he uses some of the units, and, unlike the present system, unused time can be "reclaimed". Tentative price estimate for the whole meter is £1.50 and for the disposable case alone 4p.



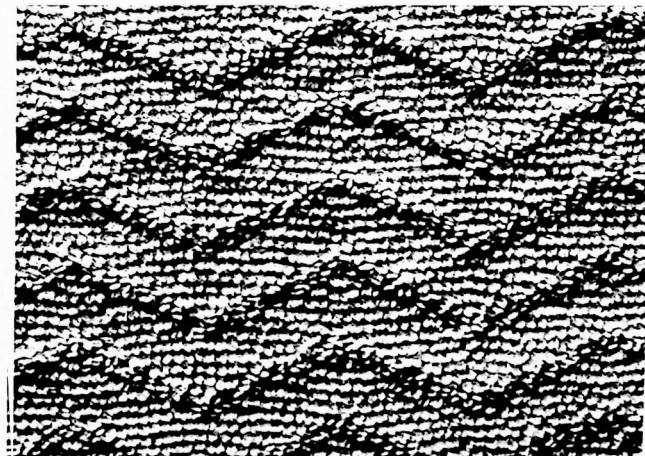
MULTI COPY
COPY
COPY
COPY

Copy cat Multicopy, a chain of instant print shops being set up in this country by the American Uniworld Organization, has been given a corporate identity by the Conran Design Group. This includes design of typeface, signs and graphics, as well as of the first shop in Baker Street which will act as a pattern for the rest. The clients required a friendly, inviting atmosphere which is here suggested by a warm red, beige and mustard gold colour scheme – even some of the machines are painted red – with the printing area clearly visible. Full length window gives clear view into the shop.



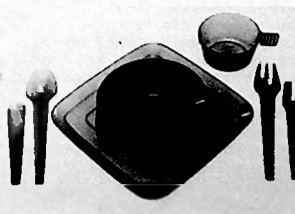
Space deck shopping Queen's Court, the central square in the Seacroft Town Centre on the outskirts of Leeds, was recently roofed over with a 100ft x 100ft space deck to provide extra cover for shoppers and allow the central space to be used for occasional exhibitions. The space

frame was considered superior to any other form of construction because of its ease of erection, minimum depth and wide columnless spans. Also, obstructions at ground level such as the children's play area and pool virtually ruled out conventional structural systems.



Colours to choice The Trafford Architects and Designers range of contract Wilton carpets offers the designer a choice of eight basic patterns and an unlimited range of colours to choose from. The basic patterns, designed in consultation with Iton Bannenberg are Large Key, Dog's Tooth, Chevron, above, Squares, Circles, Basket, Tweed and Warrow Band. The designer applies

the colourways of his choice on to a printed design sheet and returns it to the manufacturers for a quotation. Prices for carpets fully dyed to the architects' or designers' specification are £2.60 per 27in linear yard. Although the system offers great flexibility combined with one-off colour range, many designers may prefer the pristine white on white originals for their subtle beauty of texture.



A1 tableware This throwaway tableware has been moulded in styrene acrylnitrile to withstand the heat of the automatic vending and selfservice microwave ovens at Esso's new service station at Washington, near Newcastle. A Boardman Ltd, who moulded the tableware for Esso also produce a range of ordinary styrene tableware for conventional use, but only, as yet, sell it in bulk (sample price £4.90 for 1000 knives).

Books

Penrose Annual 1971: volume 64
edited by Herbert Spencer. Lund
Humphries, £5.00

With each successive annual Penrose takes itself and its subject more seriously. Graphics and communications technology are two exciting areas of discovery and invention, but this compendium does even less than its recent predecessors to exploit and express the excitement. No excuses for its own complacency either: Volume 64, proclaims the jacket, "follows the well-tried formula". Hardly surprising if this one is passed among professional departments handling print or two-dimensional design with little more than a glance and a signature, for the well-tried formula, a pot-pourri of state-of-the-art reports, company research and development features, and sketches – of colour-mag depth – on general interest topics, makes for an inert sort of chemistry.

It is important to remember how a book like Penrose survives: apart from sales to libraries (most of whom cannot be expected to exercise particularly critical sanctions in this specialist field), Penrose relies for its continued existence on yearly sales to agencies, commercial studios, and print design departments. It is surely selling them a little short to be telling them so little that they do not already know. Lund Humphries' inevitable reply to this would be that Penrose is a record of events in all the relevant disciplines, brought together in one convenient reference work. Of course it is not: the record is necessarily incomplete and selective. This is forgivable, even desirable print history tends to repeat itself – but with reference space at a premium and coffee tables out of fashion it is a pity that Penrose 64 could not have been a great deal livelier.

The Penrose Survey itself, a 14-page summing-up by Michael Bruno, Allen Hutt and James Moran, is a workmanlike enough analysis of the year, especially good on trends and developments within the newspaper industry – justly critical of and disturbed by panicky typographical changes like *The Times'* on the newspaper design front as a whole "it was hardly a vintage year". Of the features in this year's annual, the most interesting seemed to be the least comprehensively tackled. J Paul Brack and Jocelyn Chaplin, in their respective treatments of design problems in developing countries and picture perception in Africa – both fascinating subjects – could have been encouraged and allowed to contribute more than a total of 14 pages on their subjects.

Similarly, James Moran's feature on telenevangelists – with which is attached an AT-2 printout produced in the *Asahi Shimbun* exercise – leaves the reader wanting more information, both visual and textual. The articles on enamelled signs and newspaper cartoons spring from sound ideas for the annual – ideas no doubt fostered by Herbert Spencer – but again, the treatment is scarcely better than one might expect from a Sunday supplement. The major and most distressing criticism of Penrose is of its own graphics, a rejuvenation of which would do so much to redress other imbalances within the work.

The basic page layout is decidedly uninviting – New Roman wide-column body text disposed right and unjustified, with introductions, captions and blurbs set in bold and light Univers in the left margin. So much more imagination (see the advertisements – like Monotype's and Ault and Wiborg's) could have been applied to the illustrations: block sizes appear to have been

selected with little regard for the content – with overblown jacket designs printed full page in Derrick Holmes' feature. Leech cartoons printed in titchy half-column widths, and inordinately tedious monochrome halftones dropped in with the industrial features, invariably bled-off and uniformly uncommunicative. "Monument or touchstone?", asks the book's puff. Folly?
Ian Breach

The computer in art
by Jasja Reichardt. Studio Vista, 90p

There are not many areas of human endeavour left free from the incursion of the computer, and this new addition to the Studio Vista paperback series shows that computing science and technology is being applied – if experimentally – to every branch of activity generically described as art. Just as varied are the ways in which the computer produces its art output – type-written text, "hardcopy" drawings, images on film, dynamic graphics on tv screens, even by controlling the cutting tools which shape sculpture. Miss Reichardt, who is assistant director of the Institute of Contemporary Art, seeks to define this new development in the context of mid-twentieth century art forms.

It is very early days yet for what is called computer art, particularly when every experimental project gets a showing and there is not as yet a defined framework of evaluation. Whatever its ultimate significance, it is not the "last stance of abstract art", particularly since a good half of the computer graphics illustrated in this book are based on representational images – portrait, still-life or landscape. At a time when the first implications of relating the logic of computation to the intuitive processes of art are just being grasped, it is rather premature to seek to establish an apparatus of criticism which will deal with the various facets of this subject, from computer-assisted graphics to design automation.

It is evident from a head count of the contributors to this book that this branch of art is being maintained in the main by art-oriented mathematicians and scientists, people like Bela Julesz and Michael Noll of Bell Laboratories. It is interesting to compare some of the Mondrian-type graphic output from Noll's computer with the original work of Mondrian. These exercises in determinate transformations of images previously described to a computer indicate the limits of this art form in its first experimental phase. If computer art is to achieve the next level of development, it will require the participation of

the computer oriented artist or designer. To that end the most interesting aspects of this book are concerned with the work of those exceptional university art departments (for example, in Massachusetts, Ohio State, or New Mexico) which are conducting such research.

One obviously fruitful line is the use of interactive computer graphics to allow the student to explore very complex geometries displayed on the computer screen. ART 1 is a system developed by Professor Williams at the University of New Mexico which allows the student to make simple computer graphics for himself. The closer association of art and technology in the polytechnics should ultimately result in providing the art student with an insight into the processes of computation as part of his normal training. However, there is little evidence as yet of this cross-fertilisation of disciplines in the form of computer graphics. Miss Reichardt also discusses the use of the computer to produce multiples. One can foresee a situation where the customer could specify variations to a graphic theme provided by the artist, with the computer programmed to generate a different variation to each customer's requirements.

At Bell Laboratories the computer is used to plot sequences of dynamic shapes on film – frame by frame. The results are used in the production of research or educational movies, for example, to illustrate complex mathematical models. Charles Csuri at Ohio University feeds his computer with different pictorial images, which the computer uses as a base for a series of progressive deformations. The Computer Technique Group of Tokyo (now unhappily disbanded) carried out a series of experiments in which the computer was activated by ambient auditory and light stimuli and by people moving in its vicinity. The synthesis of these stimuli contributed to the ultimate graphic form generated by the computer.

I am not sure why a work on computer art covers structural engineering architecture, and ergonomics. However, I agree with the author that many of the purely functional images in these applications possess an aesthetic appeal of their own – for instance, the projections of geodesic domes by Ronald Resch at Illinois University. As for architectural graphics, I would only say in passing that several projects mounted in the United States and in this country are considerably more advanced and broader in scope than the studies listed.

Generally the book confines its survey to work in the US; I could only discover one reference to work done in Britain. It is a pity that the good work of the British Computer Arts Society, whose exhibition "Event 1" at the Royal College of Art revealed that there is a serious computer arts activity in this country, that timesharing computer graphics have arrived, and that the expense of using computers is becoming much more tractable, should not be seen as a situation of much encouragement for the computer artist. But as a first computer artist this book does provide a very useful survey of recent work in the field. For the lay reader it will provide a foretaste of what is likely to become an important art form in the next decade.

Patrick Purcell

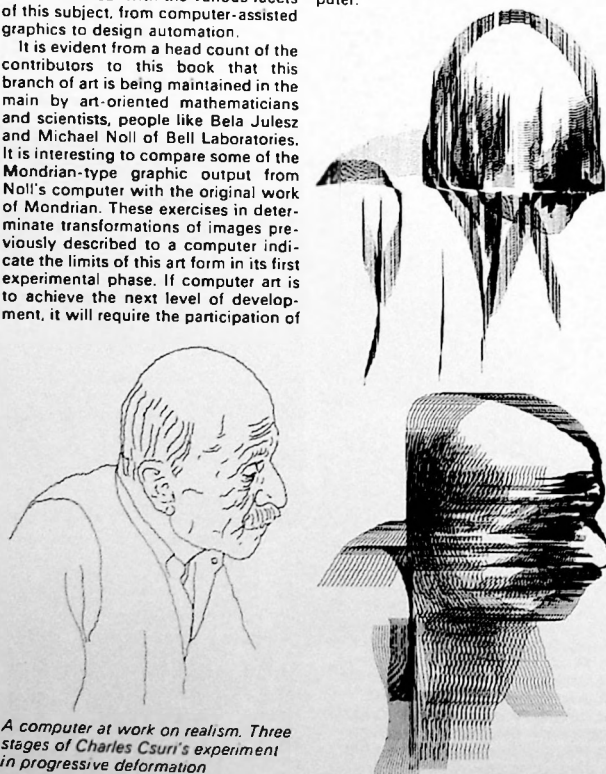
Stage lighting

by Richard Pilbrow. Studio Vista, £3.15

If the bibliography is to be trusted, only 11 other worthwhile manuals on stage lighting have been published either in Britain or the United States in the past 40 years. Considering the extent to which the theatre has been revolutionised over that period in this area, there is certainly room for a new English-language book on the subject – from Pilbrow in particular. Boss of Theatre Projects, which is unique in theatre management in producing plays itself and supplying the profession with the latest in directorial gadgetry, his own entry into the business of lighting in the early fifties began with a 30 bob-a-week office and some junky old lost lighting equipment. Oddly enough, no mention is made in this book of the pre-war German publications that aroused his interest in the resources of projection in particular.

At all events, the apparent shortage of appropriate reading matter, coupled with an increasing interest both on the part of the specialist and the ordinary man in the theatre, must account for the division of *Stage Lighting* into two parts – lighting design and the shorter, much more technical lighting mechanics. Both are, however, hopefully aimed at the "professional amateur" and are presented as an "interim report" on a territory where much still remains to be done to implement, over half a century later, the dreams of Appia and Craig.

The first section, with its line drawings and 50 halftone illustrations, makes an easy read for the intelligent theatre-goer alerted to the growing importance of stage lighting by the attention paid to it with productions as diverse as *Oh! Calcutta!* at the Royalty and *The Architect and the Emperor of Assyria* in the repertoire of the National Theatre at the Old Vic. And that this should be so is not surprising when it's remembered how rapidly the humble candle and gas lighter of the era of the actor-manager has recently moved up the theatrical hierarchy to occupy a decisive if awkward pig-in-the-middle rôle with the director and the designer. Nothing could epitomise this newly elevated status than the fact that this book



A computer at work on realism. Three stages of Charles Csuri's experiment in progressive deformation

carries a foreword by none other than Lord Olivier.

No mean director himself Lord Olivier writes that "watts, ohms, amps, gnodes lux, lumens, condensers, thyristors, integrated circuits, digital analogue conversions, ferrite core stores, chips, bits, gates and pots are secrets which are all too safe with me." As a professional theatregoer, now seeing productions with a decidedly beader eye as a result of reading Pilbrow's book, I sympathise. The trouble with *Stage Lighting* is that it lacks a glossary. The second and concisely technical half certainly lists essential lighting jargon in English, French, Italian and German and also cataloguing British and foreign suppliers. But through many of the secrets that are so worth the effort and can in fact be learned via the book, it's sometimes a matter of the book process with the light. I get stuck on the more technical advice on how to appeal to the child, the snow, stars, moon, and the conflagration.

For the professional amateur, following in Pilbrow's footsteps, I find this book a balanced and wide-ranging introduction. The book was only achieved recently in 1983 with the foundation of the Society of British Theatre Lighting Designers. And fees are still too low to make it a full time livelihood - they range in the United States from £313 to £1250 a production, and in Britain from £150 to £500 for the few final weeks of rehearsal. Royalties in both countries are rarely paid to the lighting designer, though directors often receive a nice cut in a long-running cake. But if there is any theatre-loving clown who would rather light Hamlet than play him, this is the book he needs.

Peter Roberts

Planning for London

edited by Judy Hillman; Penguin, 30p

Now, more than ever, our ordinary, concerned humans need a simple, straightforward book which sets out the pros and cons of planning for Greater London. Of course, this may be asking too much; with the constant stream of detailed reports presented as written evidence and the screed of transcript being churned out by the GLDP inquiry, facts tend to be under flux - or, more probably, obscured in the welter of conflicting opinion, much of it irrelevant. The inquiry has shown that most facts can be interpreted at least two ways, both positions being apparently logically argued by their adherents.

This Penguin Special could theoretically have been just that book. Bang up to date, unattached to any cause but calling on those best qualified to speak, it might have given the specialists (of whatever following) an object lesson in clarity. But it hasn't happened: Judy Hillman's 11 contributors - journalists, academics, architects and a planner - manage between them to provide a microcosm of the struggles and contradictions which make up London's planning scene. If there is one thing that unites the largely progressive team it is despair - despair that London's housing, transport or commercial quandaries won't be solved before the whole place becomes a sort of moveable feast for speculators, freeway builders and tourists. As a guide to attitudes the book is revealing; as a rundown on the facts and the alternatives it is creditable; as an incentive to public participation it is not very helpful.

Robert Waterhouse



Top: herring gutters at Wick, 1905. Above: at Windy Gap, County Kerry, c 1910, a private motorist and charabancs on the grand Atlantic tour. Illustrations from Scotland from old photographs (introduction and commentaries by C S Minto) and Ireland from old photographs (introduction and commentaries by Maurice Gorham). Both published by Batsford at £2.10. From the same stable as London from old photographs (DESIGN 250/78)

Architectural judgement

by Peter Collins, Faber, £3

Peter Collins is professor of architecture at McGill University, Montreal and his book is an unashamedly academic text. In working on the unappetising problem of architectural education he researched into the training processes of the other professions and was struck by the somewhat unlikely correlation between the intellectual methodology which is shared by architecture and the law. Therefore, in 1968-69 he took leave of his chair to enrol as a research fellow at Yale Law School. The book is the result of this new enthusiasm for law - and it's obvious that he savours the orotundities and phraseology which characterises its practitioners.

It reads like a law book, full of refer-

ences to cases and loaded with enlightening footnotes. The references, usually tart and to the point, to contemporary architectural theory, and personalities, are somehow particularly shocking in such a judicial context. The main burden of the argument is that architectural education (and theory) is a problem of judgement, and of developing a faculty or mental framework by which sound judgement can be consistently exercised. Living as we do in a climate which consistently derides consistency, or stability, the acceptance of a body of theory is very much more difficult than proposing one. However, we desperately need a theory on which to operate, one which is wide based and inclusive, and Professor Collins' analysis is very welcome. He takes us through current theories: rationalism, techno-

logy, and romanticism are all neatly and judicially dismembered. They are then put back together equally judicially, but somehow inconclusively.

Professor Collins emerges as civilised, concerned and intelligent, but perhaps a little too close to his new enthusiasm for legal jargon to come across very clearly on architectural matters. But what does emerge is that the law is a great deal more interesting than one had supposed; that if architecture as a profession is to survive it will need to do so in much the same way as the other professions. But the practice of law and medicine are protected, and it's not entirely surprising that architecture has been brought to its current parlous state through the pressures of the market place. There is little prospect of a cure for that.

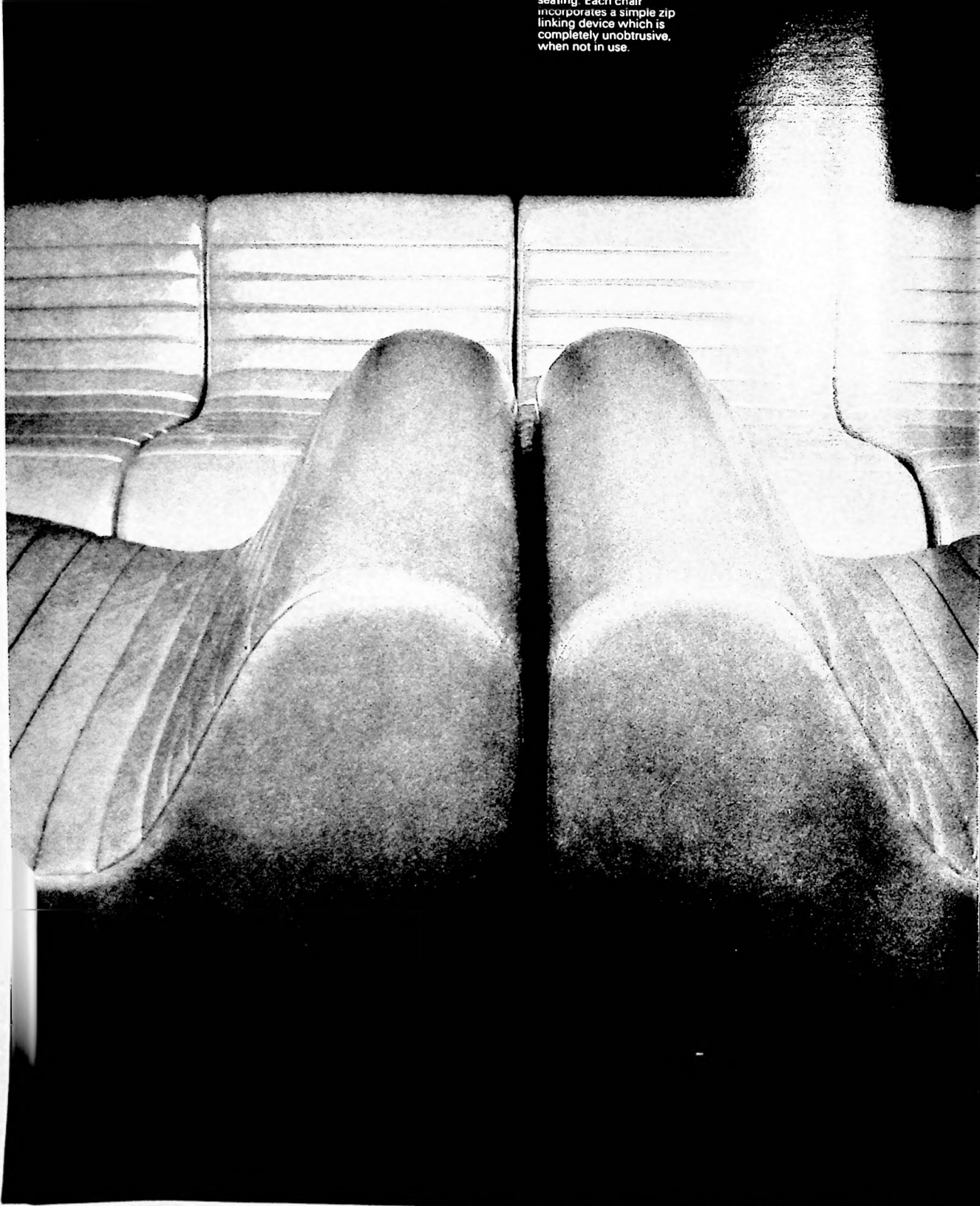
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Letters

Books CONTINUED

A history of visual communication

by Josef Müller-Brockmann; Arthur Niggli, Teufen, Sw Fr 84

Advertising, the art of persuasion, is as old as barter and trade itself and, in its visual or written form, goes back to the Sumerian cuneiform script, to Egyptian hieroglyphs and to Chinese ideograms. This splendid book, by a leading Swiss graphic designer who has also amassed an encyclopaedic knowledge of the history of his craft, surveys its whole development from those early origins to the present day, mainly in the form of some 600 well selected illustrations, accompanied by a relatively brief text in English, French and German.

While the text is obviously thoroughly researched and fluently written, the main interest of the book is its fascinating iconography, which is remarkably comprehensive. In time, it covers antiquity summarily, broadening its documentation as it gets nearer the modern period. In subject matter, it deals with graphic design in the widest sense; books, booklets, newspapers, magazines, packaging, and posters; exhibitions; trade-marks and logos; types; tv and film graphics; audio-visual programs, etc.

It includes, for instance, the first-ever English poster – William Caxton's advertisement for his books, issued in 1477. It reproduces the first issues of *The Publick Adviser* (1657) and *The City Mercury* (1675), as well as many examples of the elegantly engraved stationery, certificates, business cards and labels produced in this country before the invention of lithography, which appears to have had a pernicious effect on the quality of design.

As befits a Swiss publication, it is impeccably produced and, though not cheap, good value at its price.

René Elvin

Books received

What's in a room? by Elaine Denby (BBC Publications, 55p). Potted history of interior design to go with Radio 3 study programmes broadcast on Thursdays between 8 April–10 June.

Hospital research and briefing problems by John Green and Raymond Moss, edited by Ken Baynes (King Edward's Hospital Fund, £1.75). Full analysis of the redevelopment of St Alfege's Hospital, Greenwich.

World Patent law and practice by J W Baxter (Sweet and Maxwell, £11.50). Second cumulative supplement, up to date on 1 January, 1971.

Skopje resurgent (United Nations, New York and Geneva). The story of the UN special fund town planning project after the 1963 Skopje earthquake.

Weaving and the Warners by Sir Ernest Goodale (F Lewis Publishers, £10.50). History of the Warner family written for last year's centenary of the weaving firm. Fully illustrated.

English abbeys by Hugh Braun (Faber, £3.50). Descriptive history.

Corrections

The manufacturers of the Totem sign are Hills (Patents) Ltd, Chertsey and not as stated in DESIGN 266/73.

The Elk Unirail loose leaf binder spines cost from 7-3p each (on orders of 5000 and not as given in DESIGN 267/71).

Part work

Sir: The cover design for *New Doctor 76*, reproduced in DESIGN 266/27, raises an interesting question of artistic propriety. The cover is credited to Tony Meeuwissen, but the wallpaper and bedspread in the design are pattern papers designed in the late forties for the Curwen Press by Elizabeth Friedlander, who receives no acknowledgement. On a recent paperback cover by the same designer some tropical vegetation is formed by part of a hand-marbled paper by Douglas Cockerell, again without acknowledgement. However witty and ingenious, and even complementary, such use of other people's creative work may be, I wonder whether it is right not to mention the fact.

Hans Schmolzer, 64 Wheatlands, Heston, Hounslow, Middlesex

Putting the Italians in their place

Sir: Everybody has become increasingly bored by the continual attacks on British furniture design and unbounded praise of modern Italian furniture. Therefore, congratulations to Helen Quinn for her article in the *Guardian* of 1 April when she said, "I think it is high time somebody redressed this balance and put these highly priced Italian jobs in their proper place."

Surely most people must recognise that these pieces of art are not merely expensive, but also uncomfortable, inconvenient and impractical. If only people would stop judging by photographs and go to Italy and see what is actually on sale in Milan shops they would realise how lucky we are in Britain.

Jane Cox, Mirabel Road, London SW6

Why no laybys?

Sir: The Pennine section of the M62 (DESIGN 268/58 – 65) may be a splendid piece of design, but is it splendid enough? Anywhere else in the world a section of motorway through such country would have built-in laybys and viewing points. But not, it appears, in Britain. You will see from the tyre marks in your photograph on pages 58/59 that people turn off onto the hard-shoulder to get a view of the Scammonden reservoir. Since the whole of this area – reservoir, dam, gorge and high level bridge, is spectacularly beautiful would it not be a good place to build a motorway picnic area?

Equally, on the Carnforth-Penrith section of the M6, Killington, with its dramatic views to the east, makes an ideal spot for both a service area and permanent picnic area.

Fred Fowler, Lady Somerset Road, London NW5

M6 and the Lake District

Sir: While David Rowlands may well be right that the new section of the M6 is a handsome piece of engineering (DESIGN 268/66) he does not stress enough the consequences of bringing the Lake District to within three hours drive of over 21 million people.

The fact is that while there has been a lot of writing and talk about the problems facing the Lake District, in practice very little indeed has been done. I suggest that the landscaping, the landuse planning, of the Lake District is as much part of landscaping the M6 as the design of the route of the traffic lanes and their incorporation into

the immediate vicinity. Until this is done it cannot be claimed that this Carnforth-Penrith section of the M6 has been properly landscaped. Merely to be satisfied with the appearance of the motorway corridor is to abdicate landscape planning responsibilities.

James Stewart, Manchester 20

Does it tell the time?

Sir: I was absolutely amazed to read (DESIGN 268/34) that the clock designed by Kenneth Grange and manufactured by Taylor Instruments had won a 1971 Design Award.

I say this because the function of a clock is to tell the time. On the dial of this clock there are no minute markings,



ings, and the hour markings are almost as wide as the distance between them. In all probability the time base is accurate, but due to the design of the dial one would have to hesitate to say what the time actually was – unless, of course, one only needed to know the time to the nearest five minutes.

T Johnstone, 40 Litchfield Way, Hampstead Garden Suburb, London NW11

Obituaries

Arne Jacobsen

Like Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier, whose work he helped introduce to Denmark, Arne Jacobsen enjoyed the status of an old master during his own lifetime. "Enjoy" is perhaps too strong a word for one of his reputed modesty and shyness; but Jacobsen's fame as a designer of chairs and of classically simple buildings was worldwide. Unlike Mies and Corbusier, Jacobsen was not a pioneer. True he helped strip away some of the neo-classical cobwebs which wreathed Danish architecture in the twenties. But his reputation was grounded chiefly on an exquisite sensibility and taste – coupled with a hugely disciplined use of materials – rather than on imaginative planning or adventurous handling of space.

His career started early. In 1925, while still a student at the Copenhagen Academy of Arts, he won a silver medal for a chair design at the Paris Exhibition. Four years later, in partnership with Flemming Lassen, he gained recognition in his own country with a proposal for a circular House of the Future. Next came the much-admired Bellavista housing estate, and the inter-war period was closed by two town halls – at Aarhus (1937) and Søllerød (1940) both of which seem to have been designed under the influence of the Swedish architect, Gunnar Asplund.

Jacobsen's post-war work marks a change in all this. Buildings like Rødovre Town Hall (1955) and the SAS building Copenhagen (1959) belong to the American tradition of certain walled slab architecture which

was beginning to get into its stride by the mid fifties; while the bland forms and uncloistered planning of his own favourite, St Catherine's, earned it the nick-name of the "best motel in Oxford". Even St Cath's most savage critics, however, praised the quality of its detailing and workmanship. For in his handling of materials Jacobsen was a purist with standards of excellence undreamed of by most British architects, and he had the patience and persistence to exact those standards from the building industry.

His approach was equally thorough when it came to industrial design – and probably better suited to it. His chairs, cutlery and tableware swiftly became classics; and his textile designs, though less well known, revealed his skill as a draughtsman and watercolourist. Jacobsen leaves three buildings incomplete: the Roskilde University, Denmark; the new National Bank, Kuwait; and the new Danish Embassy in London, due for completion in 1973.

John Barr

John Barr, who died in February aged only 44, already occupied an important place in a journalistic tradition which is more finely practiced in his native America than his adopted Britain. It is the tradition of specialist high level writing for an informed general public which lies at the border of journalism and academic prose. While not itself based on original research, it probes into the research of others, interviews specialists in depth to get their views, and weaves facts and opinions into a logically ordered, balanced argument. Since it represents investigation in depth, it needs space; ill suited to television, not easily adapted to the demands of the daily press, it flourishes in weekly journals and of course in book form.

It was no accident, then, that John Barr found his journalistic niche in 1964 when he joined *New Society*, then only two years old, as a staff writer. Until then he had lectured in the University of Maryland overseas programme, that unique experiment in mass educational communication which must have provided the best possible training for what he wanted to do. His speciality up to then had been Far Eastern affairs. But on joining *New Society* he turned his attention inward. A Californian by birth, he had the advantage of hindsight when he saw Britain beginning to be faced by many of the environmental challenges which had long excited controversy in his native state. Writing from his country cottage in Bedfordshire or his summer hideaway in Redfordshire – only towards the end did he and his wife Pat migrate to London – he began to pour out a stream of carefully researched articles on environmental problems, which culminated in his two major books *Derelict Britain* and *The Assault on Our Senses*.

Better than anything, the books convey the flavour of his work. Though they read easily – he was a natural journalist – they have a density and a compression rare in English popular writing; in the best tradition of American journalism, Barr had a great regard for plenty of hard information. They also convey his passionate feeling for his adopted country: publication of *Derelict Britain*, it is not well known, was held back while a threatened libel suit was cleared, for John did not wrap matters up when he wrote about those who he considered were despoiling the countryside. These books were a fine beginning and the tragedy is that no one is likely to be able to take his place.

Peter Hall